The Philosophy of Singing

Clara Kathleen Rogers

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Rogers
The philosophy of singing

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF SINGING

BY

CLARA KATHLEEN ROGERS

"Art is truth and truth is religion."
W. M. THACKERAY

"All thought begins in feeling—wide
In the great mass its base is hid,
And, narrowing up to thought, stands glorified,
A moveless pyramid."
JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

NEW YORK
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TO

MY HUSBAND

WHOSE SYMPATHY AND ENCOURAGEMENT
HAVE MADE THE WRITING OF
THIS BOOK POSSIBLE

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INTRODUCTION

THIS little book contains the convictions which are the summing up of my whole artistic life.

I have written it, first and foremost, for myself. I felt that the only way to recognize fully and clearly what my conclusions really are, was to formulate and express them. I take it for granted that there must be others who are beset by some of the same perplexities which have made my art-life a constant struggle to attain that security of expression which would enable me at all times to voice that something of beauty and perfection stirring and urging within me, to which I could seldom give adequate utterance.

To such unsatisfied souls, the conclusions which I have reached in my struggles after the true laws of expression may be helpful, and therefore, in giving my book to the public, it is to these that it is especially addressed.

Were I to cite one half of the tentative and speculative theories which have brought me di-

rectly or indirectly to my present conclusions, there would be material enough to fill several quarto volumes. But when all theories and ideas are sifted, and the solid, fundamental truths separated from the chaff of speculation, it is astonishing into how small a compass they may be compressed.

This is, therefore, but a little book. But small as it is, it represents a quarter of a century of constant groping and reaching out for the true principles which govern the art of singing in its highest aspect, which is the most eloquent and direct expression not only of the individualized soul, but also of the great universal soul itself.

This treatise might as properly be called "The Philosophy of Life" as "The Philosophy of Singing." Some of my readers who are looking for "methods of singing" will probably consider the former a more appropriate title than the latter. I will therefore state, as simply as possible, why I call it "The Philosophy of Singing."

All that I have learned, all that I have perceived, all that I have recognized about the true purpose of life as God's expression, and about art as man's expression, have come to me through the study of musical art forms, and more especially through the particular study of singing; it is therefore natural that I should express what I have perceived of the

truth in that form in which it first revealed itself to me.

I have always believed that any one who searched earnestly, patiently, and lovingly enough for the laws governing any single art or science, must eventually reach a centre of truth that belongs to *all* art and science, from which centre the true relation and unity of things become apparent. Once arrived at this common centre, unlooked-for analogies and correspondences crowd upon the consciousness, and an insight is obtained into things which at first seemed far removed from the possibility of our comprehension.

After all, there is intrinsically but one art, and that is the art of expression, as there is intrinsically but one science, and that is the science of life; and it matters not at what point of the circumference of things we enter, so long as we bore far enough to reach the centre, for at that centre we shall find the unit from which all the rest radiate.

For instance, the study of singing, if pursued with true enthusiasm and an unflinching determination to reach the highest and truest expression, must inevitably bring the student to a consideration of psychology or metaphysics, and it follows naturally that the relation between art and ethics must likewise become apparent.

It may be argued that the singers of the last

century, who, we are taught, transcended in truth and beauty of expression the singers of to-day, knew nothing of psychology, and never considered it necessary to trouble themselves about the relations of their different organisms. But the reason why the singers of the last century did not trouble themselves about their own psychology was because it never troubled them.

We must admit that human consciousness has grown apace during the last century; that our mental development has been continually becoming more and more active; that new perceptions and powers of recognition are ever quickening and sprouting with every year of our existence; so that, in truth, the man of to-day is a much more highly organized being than the man of a century ago, which fact is perfectly natural and in accordance with the scheme of evolution.

The effect of this mental growth is, however, to disturb our equilibrium, until we have learned how to harmonize our recently acquired mental faculties both with the body and with the essential will or Ego.

We find ourselves, morally, in very much the same condition as a youth does, physically, when, having arrived at puberty, his larynx takes a sudden start and grows rapidly. He cannot at once adapt himself to the new conditions so as to con-

trol his voice, which jumps up and down in a curiously tantalizing manner, now taking on the deep tones of a man, and again the high tones of a child, much to his mortification.

We are told by physiologists that this peculiar effect on the voice is due, probably, to a more rapid growth in the cartilages than in the muscles of the larynx, which causes the muscles to lose their control over the cartilages, until a permanent readjustment takes place.*

All transitional states are necessarily uncomfortable, to say the least; but to confine myself to my analogy of the larynx: if such a disturbance is produced by a disproportionate growth of cartilage over muscle, how much more serious should we expect the disturbance to be during a disproportionate growth or development of the mind, the great working centre or battery of the human organism.

Is it not this temporary absence of equilibrium between mind and body which is manifesting itself to-day in the distressing form of nervous prostration, so called? I think that this may be pronounced at least a reasonable inference. In other words, the disproportionate growth of the mental

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*See "Voice, Song, and Speech," by Lennox Browne and Emil Behnke.

faculties and activities works in the organism as a whole in very much the same way as the disproportionate growth of the larynx in the physique of the youth. A slackness of the nervous system through reaction is induced by the excessive strain of trying to connect and harmonize the conflicting conditions, and, as a result of this slackness, some of the physiological and mental rhythms are interrupted, and loss of balance is the result. This is but a guess, it is true, yet not altogether a random one.

But to return to our forefathers: it is certainly a fact that they were not troubled with nervous prostration, and for the same reason that they were not troubled by their own psychology. In other words, they were organized more simply than we of the nineteenth century, and, consequently, they were more in harmony with pure feeling than we are.

In our forefathers, the will acted with an impulse which resembled more nearly what in the animal we call instinct, and it acted with the same directness as it does in the animal, where no complexity of consciousness disturbs spontaneity of action. Thus, the singers of the past century, whose mental evolution had not reached the advanced stage that ours has, certainly excelled us in expression. They were not troubled by the thought of how singing was done, nor had they even any abstract

knowledge of the vocal processes—but meanwhile they sang. The difference with us of the nineteenth century is, that whereas we have already a great deal of abstract knowledge of the vocal processes, which knowledge is daily increasing, we do not sing.

Still, we go groping along, some of us fondly hoping that we may yet stumble on the secret of expression that the singers of old are supposed to have held, and others hopelessly deploring that the true art of singing is a lost art. Meanwhile, we all look longingly back into history and consider the achievements of such singers as Catalani, Rubini, Malibran, Pasta, Grisi, Tamburini, Donzelli, Alboni, La Blache, Persiani, and numbers of others of minor celebrity in their day, but who, according to all accounts, were they living at present, would transcend any of the singers we have, and we try to picture to ourselves in what the triumphant beauty of their art consisted, while we hardly dare to hope that we may ever realize it.

But it is useless for us to attempt to reproduce the art of those good old days, because the secret thereof lay in the particular plane or condition of mental consciousness which man had reached—a condition which, while it carried with it an impulse for expression fully as strong as that which has ever existed, or ever can exist, yet was unhampered

by the degree of mental consciousness which is in us a barrier to spontaneity of expression.

Therefore, as mental evolution cannot retrace its steps, even for so laudable a purpose as to permit us to express ourselves in art as beautifully as did our forefathers, we must next consider how to harmonize and bring about a perfect equilibrium between our newly acquired mental consciousness and our soul's impulse for expression.

It is unthinkable that art, that greatest of all factors in the development of the higher nature of man, can really be in a state of decadence; for it is to art, or to the expression of man's higher nature through art, that we must look for the perception and recognition of the grandest expression of God in the universe, namely, the perfected soul of man.

Art is only for the time being on the downward bend, soon to mount again higher than ever before. It is pausing for a deep breath before taking the next mighty leap; it is waiting to gather force for its next triumphant phase of expression.

Meanwhile, we must learn to understand ourselves as we are, and use our new endowments of consciousness as a means to accomplish our still higher growth and development, instead of ignorantly permitting this increase to stand in the way of our highest and most direct expression, as we are now doing. The time has come for us to

achieve *consciously* in expression what the singers of the last century achieved *unconsciously;* and let us remember, to our glory, that, in consequence of our extended consciousness and wider perceptions, that which we shall express must be grander and higher than what has ever been expressed before.

I venture to make the prophecy that the greatest days of art are yet to come, and that the greatest singers have not yet been heard; that as God's expression in the universe has gone through many phases before reaching its ultimate triumphant expression—the immortal soul of man—so shall art, which is man's highest expression, also become immortal; not relatively immortal, but absolutely.

I am striking here the key-note which will reverberate in the ages to come. May the future generations be attuned to it, and fill in the harmonies.

Part I.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SINGING

CHAPTER I

THE PURPOSE OF EXPRESSION IN ART

As man is the highest expression of God, so art is the highest expression of man, because art is the only thing in which he is creative, and because man — as a creator — becomes thereby an humble synonym of God. Expression is a necessity to him in whom the latent conception is ripe, as much as the giving birth to the child is a necessity when the period of gestation is completed. Nor can the artist know the quality of his power until his work stands forth complete. Then only can he gaze upon it, or hear it; then only can he contemplate the nature of his own conception; then only, like the Creator of the universe, can he say, it is good.

There are two distinct kinds of art. One is that which expresses correctly and skilfully what the artist appreciates and comprehends of nature's harmonies, in their multitudinous and ever-varying forms. This kind of art bears the characteristic of truth to nature (as far as it goes), and is, we may say, limited by nature. This we call realism. It is real, it is true, as regards the external order of things, but no more.

The other kind of art is that wherein the artist expresses what he feels of God in nature. The more of God he feels, the more exalted and sublime his art becomes: he is the veritable interpreter of God to his kind, as well as to himself. We call such art inspired, because we feel, without knowing why, that it is not merely the reproduction, more or less excellent in degree, of what we average mortals see and hear, think and feel, about all the marvellous works of the Creator, but that it is different in kind. That it speaks to us of that with which we, in our active and material lives, are unfamiliar. We feel that the source of such art is deeper and purer; that it speaks the truth to us about great mysteries; that it brings us into relation with the unknown; that it pictures to us possibilities of an ecstasy entirely outside of and beyond the sensuous, which feeling in man is the dawning perception of his own great destiny. It is the sunrise in the soul of man.

It is, then, the supreme privilege of the artist, above all others, to be the direct interpreter of God. I say *direct*, because art expresses the emotions of the soul, which soul is the highest expression of God in man. Man's power of expression in art, with its underlying conception, is therefore the reflected power of God, as the light of the moon is the reflected light of the sun.

Music is the highest expression of art, because it is the only art in which the form of expression is not limited by being defined in advance. In

the plastic arts, the model has already been shaped by nature. The artist must follow the forms of nature in order to express what he perceives or what he feels of the sublime or beautiful in nature: not so in music. Here his emotions, in making for utterance, clothe themselves in forms not arbitrary nor prescribed. Wagner says, "Music bears the same relation to the other arts that religion does to the Church." And this is true of music in its highest aspect—of music which is true and pure in its expression. But when music is under bondage to the conventional, it no longer merits this distinction. For conventionality of form, in music, becomes a far greater limitation to the feeling of the composer than any of nature's forms which are followed in the plastic arts. Musical form can only be perfect when it fits itself to the emotion, which emotion must rule absolute. Then, truly, can we say with Schopenhauer of musicians, "They speak the highest wisdom in a language which their reason does not understand."

Singing is the highest expression of music, because it is the most direct expression of the emotions of the soul. The voice is the only instrument which can respond with absolute spontaneity to the will, there being nothing to break or divert the magnetic current between the will and its vehicle, when natural law is allowed to prevail by the singer. The voice is the only instrument which is a part of our organism; the only instrument which is an attachment to the soul itself. The

real impulse to sing is the unconscious emotion of the soul making for utterance. It is the soul instructing the voice, through its messenger, the mind, "Render my power into sound, that I may know it."

What a glorious mission! To voice the silent language of the soul! And to think that there are those of us who sing only to please each other —to make the time pass pleasantly; or to become thereby more desirable members of society! To think that there should be those who regard singing as nothing more than an accomplishment, a pastime, an additional grace! This God-given means of revealing our innermost depths! How can we ever be satisfied so to belittle it? Truly it is a sad ignorance which blinds us to the fact that only those should sing who sing because they must. Those who have never had an impulse to give vent to their emotions in song should not attempt to train their voices to a skilful expression of—nothing. The lack of natural impulse to sing is nature's unerring signal not to attempt to follow that path of expression. Nor should those who are lacking in that impulse feel that they are debarred or shut out from free expression of their own depths. Is there not poetry? Is there not the drama? Is there not the platform, the pulpit? How grand are these outlets for the hidden treasures of the soul! Or the plastic arts? Shall not some of these express the hidden power of those of us who cannot sing?

It is true the plastic arts do not bear God's message to the outer world in the twinkling of an eye, like song; but, if the process of expression in these is more laborious, the expression itself is all the more enduring. The plastic arts are lasting monuments of truth throughout the ages. They outlive the scoffer, the egotist, and the blind, who are not ready to receive their message of truth; and the truth remains locked within, in safe preservation, for those who wait, and who hold the key. Here we see once more the beautiful law of compensation. The Creator has endowed every being with a means of expression, suitable to his feeling, and to his power of perception. Therefore, let us look to it that we walk on our own road instead of attempting to crowd into the path of another, and so miss our own way. Let us remember that expression in art is only a necessity to the artist, but not to the artisan. Let us remember, also, that all expression is not through art alone. The artisan can express what he feels of God's truth in his work and in his life, as well as the artist; and as he cannot express truly more than he feels, let him be content with his handicraft, and let him learn to express himself in that by the excellence of his work. All of us were not meant to sing the truth, to declaim the truth, to paint the truth, or to carve it in marble. Some of us were made to *live* the truth, and in so living to be a benediction to our kind, and veritable interpreters to them of God's love.

There is nothing that will so quickly degrade art as artificiality, "the outward and visible form, without the inward and spiritual grace." And there is nothing more demoralizing than to follow any art simply as a profession, or as a means of livelihood, without an intuitive feeling of necessity for that particular form of expression, for our own sake, for our own higher development, and for no other purpose. It is demoralizing to dedicate ourselves to any art out of simple expediency, or with a view to success or popularity only, or to the loaves and fishes it may bring us, where there is no call, because, in doing so, we are untrue to ourselves. First, we are thereby ignoring or checking our *natural* impulse for our true, God-given form of expression, whatever that form of expression may be; for the soul-impulse never errs. Secondly, we are contracting the habit of working in a half-hearted, phlegmatic, material way, the effect of which is soon felt in every act of our lives. We gradually become intellectually stunted and disabled, uninspiring and dull, heavy and unmagnetic, discontented with ourselves and others, bitter and captious, jealous, ungenerous, and hypercritical of the achievements of others. These are all symptoms of a perverted purpose in life, of low aims in high fields. But this is not the only evil that it works. It publishes and helps to establish a low standard in art itself. It drags a lofty ideal down to a commonplace level. It makes us forget what treasures true art holds for

us, and it induces us to turn our inquiring gaze on more material things; for these, we feel, at least, are of their kind genuine. Were it not that the law outlives the law-breakers, the Temple of Art would long since have been shattered to atoms, and trampled under foot by such iconoclasts as egotism, vanity, self-interest, and disloyalty to truth. But this is not all. There are those, having the natural, the God-given intuition to express themselves in song, whose instrument of expression, the voice, is not in order, and cannot therefore fulfil its mission of uttering the feelings of the singer with directness, with spontaneity, or with truth. The singer perceives a discrepancy between the ideal feeling to be expressed and that to which the voice gives utterance, and disappointment and discouragement ensue. "I have mistaken my vocation," is the complaint. "Singing gives me no satisfaction, nor can I hope that others will enjoy hearing me sing. I will learn to play the piano or the violin; I will become a poet, an actor, or a journalist. I will try the law, medicine, or politics, or I will go into business." All in vain. He who was created to express himself in song will make but a poor pianist or violinist, but an uninspired poet or actor, a crabbed and commonplace journalist. He will make but a blundering lawyer or doctor, an unsuccessful man of business. For there will be no real enthusiasm as motive power to action, and therefore his mental resolution must stand in place of that enthu-

siasm. And we all of us know from experience, that to make up our minds to a thing is but a poor substitute, as motive power, for the real love for and enthusiastic desire to achieve an object. Under these conditions will also become evident some, or all, of those same symptoms of a perverted purpose in life which I cited in connection with the first type; that is, of those who, having no innate love, no intuitive feeling of necessity for a particular form of expression in art, yet embrace it out of expediency. He who has the natural or God-given instinct to express his feelings in song, and whose voice is not yet responsive, must not weakly abandon his calling and half-heartedly take up with some other vocation. He must first find out what defect exists in his vocal instrument, if any, that hinders the direct and spontaneous utterance of his feelings, and then work intelligently, earnestly, persistently, and hopefully until such hinderance is removed. If necessary, he must practically readjust his instrument, and then exercise it until it is able and ready to carry directly the message from his soul to the outer world. Secondly, if he perceives that his failure to express his feelings in song is due, not to defect in the instrument itself, but rather to a lack of harmony between his different organisms, he must try first to perceive how those organisms are related the one to the other, and then bend all his endeavors to re-establish a harmony between them. I repeat, he must bring all his

love, all his enthusiasm, to bear on the work that may be necessary for this conquest, for his own sake, if not for the sake of art; because, if we disregard our natural impulse for expression, whether through habitual inertia, or half-heartedness in the performance of our tasks, we annihilate thereby the impulse itself, and bring about stagnation in the source of that impulse, the will. For natural law has decreed that life shall be sustained by action and reaction; and therefore, if the action of expression of that latent power which is ours be suppressed, the necessary reaction on the power itself must also be lacking, and this means death to latent power, death to all growth, to all higher development. If we deny ourselves expression, there will soon cease to be anything to express. It is thus that conscious man, produced after a long and patient sequence of tentative expressions through God's own instrument, nature, may work his own destruction through the non-fulfilment of this law of eternal life, expression. When nature has so unconsciously and so beautifully unfolded the divine power in its infinite variety of concept from inorganic life to its final triumphant expression of organic life, man—that fittest receptacle and organ of God's own Word, the soul—shall man, by neglecting to express that word, ignore that it is his? Shall he bear within his hidden depths a still-born soul? Alas! it does not take so long for such to sink back into brutishness, as it did to build up, cell by cell, that noble structure! This

is truly self-annihilation! The only unpardonable sin. Believe me, there is no other death than this! Therefore is it imperative that we should express ourselves at first tentatively, like Nature, while she was yet too young in skill to utter in one note the highest expression of God's power. The voice of Nature has been trained in eternity. Shall we begrudge a dozen short years of our lives to the perfecting of our organ of expression? Or be discouraged because the process of great achievements is but slow?

Those who approach art because art first reached out its arms to them, and who approach it on their knees, with faith, with hope, with love, with religion, thinking not of self, nor of aught that shall result to them from their devotion to it, but only that through art they may utter truth, and so fulfil art's real purpose, and with it the highest purpose of their own lives—those shall indeed know the blessedness of power, of growth, of inspiration, and of love.

To the singer who sings because his soul requires of him that he should sing, and who works long and earnestly to master the language of his art, so that nothing of the true and holy may be lost through his lack of skill in expression, success cannot be lacking. The attendant loaves and fishes must also be there, as incidents, for such art is as convincing as it is rare, and our fellows cannot afford to be without it. It will need no advance agent to herald its coming, no glowing

paragraphs to announce to us that we are to shout with elation, or weep with tenderness. When we hear it we shall recognize it, for it will co-vibrate with our own note of truth within, and we shall feel in it our own unexpressed aspiration.

But this is purely an ideal, I hear you say. So be it, I answer. But what is the ideal but our unconscious and more subtle perception of the real! And in writing these chapters I have it in my heart that the ideal of to-day shall be the real of to-morrow.

CHAPTER II

THE EMOTIONS IN SINGING

THOSE who regard the art of singing as anything more than a means to an end, do not comprehend the true purpose of that art, much less can they hope ever to fulfil that purpose. The true purpose of singing is to give utterance to certain hidden depths in our nature which can be adequately expressed in no other way. The voice is the only vehicle perfectly adapted to this purpose; it alone can reveal to us our inmost feelings, because it is our only direct means of expression. If the voice, more than any language, more than any other instrument of expression, can reveal to us our own hidden depths, and convey those depths to other souls of men, it is because voice vibrates directly to the feeling itself, when it fulfils its natural mission. By fulfilling its *natural* mission, I mean, when voice is not hindered from vibrating to the feeling by artificial methods of tone-production, which methods include certain mental processes which are fatal to spontaneity. To sing should always mean to have some definite feeling to express. Never should a tone be sung unless it be to carry a message to the listener, be

it of love or hate, ecstasy or despair. If it convey no message from soul to soul, it will indeed be dull and unmagnetic, like all other perfunctory expressions. Feeling is not only the true motor of voice, it is the very *life* of voice. Without it there can be no growth nor variation of tone, no beautiful tone-waves nor vibrations. There is the same difference between voice which expresses real feeling, and that which does not, as there is between a fresh, crisp leaf on a growing plant, and one which has been gathered long since, and pressed between the pages of a book. A desiccated leaf is, in fact, very much like a tone without a living spring of emotion.

The art of tone-production is, in itself, nothing more than the fashioning or preparing an instrument on which to play. The art of singing in its completeness is nothing more than a skill acquired in playing on that most wonderful of all instruments—the voice. It can, therefore, only be correctly classified as technique.

The acquired power of control over the voice, and ability to execute any difficulty, bear the same relation to the singer that rhetorical skill does to the poet, or to the orator; that skill in reproducing the forms of objects on canvas does to the painter; that perfect mastery over the fingers and over the key-board of the piano does to the pianist, and so forth *ad infinitum*. And what value has this skill except as a means to an end? Mere skill only appeals to the vulgar. The *tour de force*,

so called, is applauded by the mob, it is true; but it has no place in the Temple of Art, and true devotees regard it not. Art is the mouthpiece of the divine power which lies latent in the inmost recesses of our own nature; it is the messenger of God within to the outer world; it is an expression of eternal truth to those who wait and listen. If it bear us no message from the eternal source of truth it is not immortal, and it fails utterly in its purpose. Such art is degraded to mere mechanism, and cannot outlive the machine which produces it. Was it Shakespeare's skill as a dramatist that made his works what they are to-day? Was it Raphael's skill as a painter that we feast on in the "Transfiguration," or the Sistine "Madonna"? Was it Beethoven's skill as a musician which has caused his symphonies to live, and be an inspiration to us to-day? No. It is the living truth to which the plays bear witness, it is the promise from God that illuminates the pictures, it is the whispered message from the soul of the universe that the symphony breathes into our ear, which finds a response in those inmost recesses of our nature where truth abides, and opens out to us vistas of incalculable breadth; which awakens into life dormant feelings, latent possibilities, and adds wings to our lethargic fancy. This is indeed the fulfilment of art's purpose. A divine messenger is art. And woe to the ungodly who bar the way to him! Woe to the egotist who would hold him back or persuade him from the straight road to

our souls! And woe to the messenger himself if he yield to such persuasion! For he betrays a sacred trust, and brings to those who await his coming a stone when they have asked for bread.

It will doubtless be objected that it is not possible to call up a real emotion at will; that real feeling cannot be coaxed or compelled; that it can only be awakened to impulse by being actually stirred from without. That in art, therefore, there can be no real emotion, but only a semblance. And that the highest art consists in creating so fine an artificial reproduction of the feeling itself that it suggests the real emotion to the listener, and in so doing excites a thrill corresponding to that real emotion of which the semblance was so skilfully expressed. I maintain, however, that the real feeling itself *can* be conveyed by the voice, directly from its source. That a wave of emotion of any kind, and in any degree, can be stirred by a reflex action of the mind in the great sea of all emotion, the soul itself. Moreover, I maintain that this emotion from the soul itself is conveyed directly through the voice to the auditor, and that the corresponding emotion of the auditor co-vibrates *immediately* to the voice's expression, without the aid of the imagination. As an example: You are to sing a song by Schumann, written to Heine's words. Which would you try to interpret? The true meaning of the words, or the true feeling of the music, or both? And where do the emotions come in? Let us first see

how it was with Schumann. He read Heine's verses, and was so impressed by the emotion which dictated them that his own emotions were stirred to expression in music. In other words, the unconscious emotions which moved Heine to expression in poetry, by a reflex action stirred those same emotions in Schumann, who again expressed them in music. The singer now wishes to voice—what? The music only? Or, the words and the music? Surely not that alone. For these are only the forms which Heine and Schumann respectively adopted to express the emotion which stirred unconsciously within. The singer, then, must, in his turn, be stirred by the same emotion which stirred both Heine and Schumann into expression. He must penetrate behind these mere forms of expression, poetry and music, and make straight for the emotion itself. Then will the singer voice the emotion which stirred both Heine and Schumann, and which in its turn stirred also him.

Where the composer has simply *written music to the poet's words* without any real stirring of the emotions, this trinity of emotion in unity is, of course, impossible. But where the poet is true to his own emotion, and the musician true alike to the poet's emotion and his own, the singer, if properly sensitive to either music or poetry, or both, cannot help following suit by a true expression in turn.

Hence we should never sing music which we do

not feel. There must be discord somewhere when the singer remains insensible to the underlying emotion of both poet and composer.

This expression of emotion, direct from its source, must not be confused with what is commonly termed "emotional singing." Emotional singing, as it is generally understood, is the outcome of a very conscious and a very external process. It shows itself in contortions, in a visible striving for an expression of feeling which is not in itself genuine, and which always fails to impress the auditor. This is a semblance of emotion artificially pumped up to the surface, and not true emotion acting by virtue of its own inherent impulse. The effect of such artificial emotion is always blatant, vulgar, restless, and disturbing. Whereas, all emotion which is impelled directly from the silent soul, and undiverted by conscious mental or physical processes, is quiet and discreet in its expression; never excessive, and always restful in effect; but, at the same time, most penetrating and searching. There is the same difference between emotional singing, so called, and singing with the emotions as motive power, as there is between effort and energy. Effort is always obtrusive, disturbing, and fatiguing in its effect, while the effect of energy is always exhilarating and inspiring. True emotion, direct from its source, is so potent in its effect that a single tone of the voice impelled by it can move us to our innermost depths. No need of the word to suggest

the emotion; one simple tone that is the outcome of an enthusiastic desire to express joy will be in itself a whole jubilate. One simple tone impelled by the active desire to express tender pity will melt us to tears.

If a thing is not, it cannot be produced. But emotion *is*, and all and every emotion is latent in the soul. The soul will give us of its emotion whatever we ask for, both in quality and in degree: enthusiasm, anger, tenderness, sorrow, and any and every modification of these and all other emotions, and that in exactly the measure we demand them; no more, no less. As from a reservoir of water we may require a drop, or enough to supply a whole city, so will the soul yield of its emotion whatever the mind shall demand. Moreover, the emotion will be yielded with a strong impulse of will, because self-manifestation is the inherent law of power, and emotion is one form of power. The soul's desire, therefore, is for a means, for an agent of manifestation. It follows that when the mind demands of the soul that power in order that it may be expressed by the body, an eager response to the demand follows instantaneously. This eager response is will, direct from the soul, and charged with the soul's emotion; and will, when impelled by emotion, is, as I have already stated, the true motor of voice, when voice fulfils its legitimate or natural mission of bearing the soul's message to the outer world.

I touched once before on the fact that there

exists a possible and a dangerous obstacle to the performance of the natural mission of voice. That obstacle is what? It is a superfluous and misdirected mental activity, which is fruitful of a corresponding obstruction on the part of the body. In the body this obstruction takes the form of superfluous or unnatural tension; and unnatural tension in the body annihilates freedom of expression. Let us try to define in what this superfluous and pernicious mental activity consists. It consists, first, in the mind establishing an independent and conscious will of its own with which it acts directly on the body, in opposition to the spiritual or essential will, which is the real, the true motor; and the mental energy, which should simply dominate the body in the service of the soul for the purpose of expression, becomes absorbed in its own egotism. Secondly, it appropriates to itself (instead of passively and faithfully conveying it to the body) that energy which it has received in trust from the soul for vitalizing the body to the performance of its natural function. And what is the result of this abuse of trust? The utter defeat of the mind's independent efforts; for, the soul-current of energy being broken, through the mind interposing itself as an obstacle between soul and body, the body now lacks the vitalizing principle wherewith to execute the determination of the mental will itself.

Again, it is the function of the mind, according to natural law, to select and to impress the body,

either by direct or reflex action, with the form of emotion to be expressed. And natural law remains immutable in spite of the transgressions of its interpreters. So, while the essential emotion itself is cut off or obstructed by the mind, the impression itself of the mind on the body remains. Therefore, the body is impressed by the mind's own egotism and self-sufficiency, and in its turn expresses a will of its own. This "will of its own" expresses itself in excessive tension, which tension is resistance to the expression of the form of emotion itself upon which the mind has determined.

This mental egotism aids defeat in yet other ways: First, the mind, not content with impressing its own purpose on the body, also officiously defines some of the muscular or mechanical movements made in the process of tone-production. Secondly, it forms a premonitory idea of how the voice shall sound, either as to pitch, or quality, or both. This is fatal to spontaneity of expression. It is thus that conscious, independent, mental activity not only obstructs the soul's unconscious power from reaching the outer world, but also defeats itself in its egotistic efforts for the expression of its own conscious power. Emerson has said truly, "The blindness of the intellect begins when it would be something of itself. The weakness of the will begins when the individual would be something of himself."

Art is impersonal. It is both higher and greater than the individual whose form of expression it

becomes. The artist is only the medium selected by the omnipresent creative energy as the fittest subject for the expression and preservation of the power of truth intrusted to him. In himself the artist, as an individual, is nothing. He is only something by virtue of being chosen as a mouthpiece, like unto certain birds and fishes, which in the process of evolution were selected by nature as the fittest to represent and to preserve their species. The artist only represents the law of natural selection and the "survival of the fittest" on a higher plane, and applied to man, instead of to one of the inferior or more rudimentary mammals. The artist, in his unconscious depths, but holds the truth in trust for posterity and for his own instruction. Let him see to it, therefore, that he concern himself only with the truth, and not with himself and his own glorification. Let him emulate nature, which carries out with such beautiful unconsciousness and passivity and to such perfection the processes of evolution to the fulfilment of the divine purpose. Away with egotism, away with pride of opinion; let him be passive and grandly receptive to the true and the beautiful, wherever he shall meet with them. Let him not limit himself by seeking them in this or that favored spot, for the true and the beautiful are often found in unlikely places. Who would ever have thought of seeking for a pearl within the dingy and shapeless oyster?

Passivity of mind to the silent power of the

soul; free and unlimited receptiveness to the true and the beautiful as we may see it represented in nature and in the faithful work of other men; an ardent desire to be faithful and impersonal ourselves in the utterance of that truth which it shall be given to us to express—these are the conditions which will render it easy for us to reach the expression of our soul's emotions in their highest integrity.

There can be no exact formula given or defined how to reach this ideal, this grafting of the unconscious feelings on to the conscious form of utterance in singing. In this every singer must find his or her own method. I can only indicate here that it is necessary to acquire mental and physical repose and freedom.

Nothing can aid so effectually to bring about this repose and freedom as a clear understanding of the nature of our triune organism and the proper relation of its parts. Our feeling must always lead, for what we really *feel* to be true is always true for us. Our reason is only to be relied on when it is tethered to feeling. The soul never errs, and it is the soul which makes itself felt in all intuitive feelings, in all unconscious impulses. Then let us wait on the soul. Thus will the mind become passive and do what is required of it, and no more. Thus will the egotistic mental will lie still and presently die out from disuse, and thus will the body free itself from the bondage of that fatal automatism which causes it to express the

mental egotism instead of reflecting the soul. Let us bear in mind that the highest and truest part of us is that of which we are unconscious. That our highest and greatest power is that of which we are unconscious until after it has expressed itself. That the expression of the power will not be perfect unless the process of that expression be so unconscious that we ourselves are as much surprised and impressed by its effect as our auditors. Let us also bear in mind that in art our feelings are not moved by the dramatic situation itself, for the dramatic situation simply indicates the nature of the emotion to be expressed. Our emotion is stirred to expression by the action of the mind, and it is the effect of that expression which moves our feelings by reflex action. As an illustration, when we see a truly inspired actress really moved to tears in playing some intensely emotional part, it is not the emotion itself which she is representing that moves her, but her own expression of that emotion, which affects her to tears just as it does her audience. She becomes for the time being her own auditor, the enjoyer of her own art, the recognizer of her own truth. This is the triumph of perfect expression. This is the highest point that dramatic art can reach. It is like the bird that pecks at the painted cherry; it is like the artist who attempts to draw aside the curtain that he has painted. When the artist is himself deceived by the living truth in his own art, it is art indeed! This sublime point of ex-

pression can only be reached unconsciously. There is no planning and manœuvring in the process, no self-gratulation in the result. Far from it! There is a feeling of profound awe, as of something wonderful and incomprehensible, something mysterious that has happened. What voice has spoken through me? cries the artist, for in faith it was not I who spoke. Whose was the voice which sang through me? cries the singer, for in faith it was not I who sang. But I listen and am glad!

CHAPTER III

THE MIND IN SINGING

SINGING is an expression of the emotions, and not of the intellect; or, in other words, of the soul, and not of the mind. The mind has most certainly its function in singing, but unless that function be clearly understood, and unless the mind be trained to perform that function and no other, it becomes a serious stumbling-block to the singer. There is no greater hinderance to spontaneity of expression than that which is caused by superfluous mental activity, or an activity of the mind which is independent or in excess of what is required for the proper performance of its legitimate function. And what is the legitimate function of the mind in singing? To give form to the emotions of the soul, or will-impulse. The mind is the organ of the soul, and interprets or formulates the soul's emotions to the body which expresses them. The mind, therefore, is like the middle-man who serves as go-between to each of the others; it is the connecting link between spirit and matter.

Therefore, if the mind is to perform the function of waiting on the soul and communicating

its emotional impulses to the body which is to express them, it must be rightly centred, or concentrated; otherwise it will not interpret those emotional impulses correctly or clearly to the body. But here precisely is the difficulty. In the human organism of to-day the mind has acquired such great independent activity, and occupies itself with so many things that are outside of its legitimate function, that it ceases to be a faithful servant of the soul, or interpreter of the essential will-impulse. Moreover, in this independent and excessive mental activity the mind takes part in directing the process of tone-production, which is not only a superfluous activity, but also a positive hinderance to spontaneity of expression. In the previous essay entitled The Emotions in Singing, I have enlarged on the mind as an obstruction to the spontaneous utterance of the emotions. The mind should neither direct the process, nor take cognizance of it during the act of singing. The mind should be occupied with purpose, not process. It should formulate what is to be done, not *how* or in what way it is to be done. It is not the mind which is the true motor of sound, but the will, which is the soul in action; and when the mind directs the process of singing, it usurps a function which does not belong to it. In other words, it interferes with nature's highest impulse, the soul's emotion which makes for utterance. Again, the body, as an organ of expression, is sufficient unto itself, and needs no directing as to

mechanical process. We may regard the body in the light of a wonderful and complete machine, so constructed by nature as to be capable of expressing all the emotions with every degree of modification, in instantaneous response to the will. In illustration of this statement, consider the wonderful eloquence of expression observable in the face and whole body of an infant. What can be more eloquent than the pathetic expression of the little creature in pain? Or its eager expression when reaching out for some desired object? Or its expression of satisfaction when that object is attained? Certainly the mind can in this case have no directing influence in the process of expression, for the good reason that the mental faculties in the infant are as yet undeveloped and in abeyance; and neither can there be any consciousness in the infant of anything besides the feeling which is expressed. In the infant, then, the body responds instantaneously and automatically to the emotions, and in so doing expresses those emotions to perfection. The capacity and readiness for expression are complete in the body, and need no directing nor watching in the process. The mind, then, is manifestly an intruder between *real* emotion and its organ of expression, the body, and has in nature no part in that expression. In art, however, where the emotions are to be expressed by selection, it is different. Here the mind has a twofold function. First, that of perceiving what emotion is adapted to the subject to

be expressed; secondly, of selecting that emotion from the great reservoir of all emotion, the soul. Mind, therefore, with its twofold function of receiving impressions from the outer world and also the soul's impulses of emotion, is the great junction or centre of our organism. It is the central station of both action and reaction; it is the great battery of nature's telegraphic system, the nerves, which convey along their fibres the formulated impulses of the soul to the outer world; receiving in return from those impulses, when expressed, an impression which they carry back to their original source, the soul. In this way does the soul, through expression, become conscious, and recognize its latent power. Therefore, if the mind controls the orderly working of the law of action and reaction between soul and body, how important it becomes to secure its proper concentration, its singleness of purpose in the performance of its twofold function as the soul's messenger. And how are we to secure this concentration, this singleness of purpose? By keeping the mind in close relation to the feeling; by always referring thought to feeling; by never thinking independently of feeling; by never allowing the thoughts to wander from the purpose of expression (that is, from the emotion to be expressed), but compelling them to rest in passive expectation of the effect of the process of expression. This may convey to the reader the idea that there must be mental deliberation in the one in-

stance, and mental restraint in the other; but that is not so. Mental selection from the reservoir of crude emotion is not a deliberate act of the mind; but is, rather, in the flash-like rapidity of its action, like a sympathetic vibration to the emotion itself. Again, the mental condition of receptiveness to the effect of the sound expressed is like a moment of mental repose, or relaxation, when passivity follows activity. The mind must literally await the result or effect of the command that it has already given to the body, as in firing a pistol you wait for the report, having pulled the trigger. It is but an instant that you have to wait, but that instant is one of complete passivity. This is exactly the mental attitude in singing. The mind, having provided the formula of that which is to be expressed, passively awaits the sound that voices it. We must always remember that both the mental and physical faculties are simply organs or servants of the will, or soul's desire for expression, and that they must, therefore, be always passive to the will in action. Without this passivity there can be no harmonious relations between the organs; they will surely conflict with each other, thereby causing sound to be expressed which conveys nothing of the soul's emotions, but which is hard and dry, without life and without color, giving no pleasure to either the singer or the auditor; sound which is uninspired by feeling, and consequently totally unmagnetic in its effect.

If, on the other hand, a perfect understanding

of those laws which govern the relation of the mental and physical faculties with the will, and obedience to them, be established, a great repose and freedom throughout the whole triune organism will follow; and the utterance of the emotions in song will become a great and wonderful joy to the singer, who will instantly recognize that utterance to be the expression of the very innermost self, which is no other than truth expressed in song.

CHAPTER IV

THE BODY IN SINGING

THE body is not to be regarded as a limitation to the soul, but rather as the soul's instrument of expression.

In the process of growth towards perfection, the body is as necessary to the soul as an instrument of expression, as the soul is necessary to the body as the sustainer of life. The soul, being inorganic, requires an organ for the utterance of its latent power; because without expression there can be no recognition, and is not the recognition of latent power the end and aim of all expression? This necessity for expression renders it instinctive in us to manifest our latent power, whatever its kind or whatever its degree.

The natural impulse for expression, which is the key-note of our being, is not to the end that others may recognize our power, but first and foremost that we ourselves may recognize it; for, what we possess, not knowing that we possess it, we might as well not possess at all. Power unmanifested, that is, not expressed, is practically non-existent. Hence the impulse of latent power which makes for expression, which is called will.

Will was directly evolved from soul, as the first active manifestation of the soul's desire or impulse for expression. Have we not a mighty example of this in the history of the Creation, when God willed "Let there be light," and there was light? Light was the first expression of God's latent power; that same power which he afterwards expressed in other inorganic forms, each in its own good time. These inorganic forms, in their correlated totality, we call the universe, and it is the universe which serves the Creator as an organized instrument of expression.

The body, then, is to man what the universe is to God, an organized instrument of expression. Do we regard the universe as a limitation to God —the Spirit? Certainly not. Then neither let us regard the body as a limitation to the soul, or to that proportion of the Divine Afflatus appropriated by each of us; but rather let us recognize in it the vehicle by means of which our highest aspirations, our highest possibilities, as well as our deepest emotions are brought to light. Without the body the soul could not know its own wisdom; without the body the soul could not enjoy its own love; without the body the soul could never become all-conscious—or one with the universal soul. The body, then, is an indispensable factor in the fulfilment of man's highest destiny, and as such we should respect it and care for it; we should develop and educate it, that it may be strong and vigorous, and ready at all times and in all its parts for the demands made on it.

Does the soul need a thinking-machine? The brain must be able to respond by bearing the strain without giving way. Does the soul require a working-machine? The muscles and sinews must be both firm and supple for the task. Does the soul require a singing-machine, to pour out its depths of divine emotion and reach other souls of men? The lungs and the throat must be healthy and able to respond with flash-like rapidity to the command of the will, that the emotional impulse may lose nothing of its vital force in the process of being voiced.

What a supremely important function is that of the body! It is the ship that bears us across the turbulent waters to the Promised Land. But, like the ship, which is passive to the winds, under the guidance of the captain, the body must also be passive to the will.

I have spoken of the body in its real aspect, or in other words, as God created it, for a great purpose. Those, however, who consider the body from the standpoint of what man has made of it, will object that I have described it in its ideal aspect. Alas, that the human body of to-day should not be always what I have painted it! It is, indeed, often but too justly termed the prison-house of the soul! And no wonder, when we consider the severe and improper treatment that it receives at our hands, that it should have deserved the reputation of concealing, instead of reflecting, its light.

It is not my purpose in this treatise to enter into questions of either hygiene or morals, nor yet to account for the numerous feeble, ill-conditioned, ill-regulated, and inefficient human machines of to-day. I can only here and now attribute their existence to the imperfect comprehension of our threefold nature, or human trinity, and to the failure to perceive the true relation which, according to natural law, should exist between the soul and its organs, mind and body, as I have attempted in this and the preceding essays to represent them. The important question which confronts us now is, how to remedy the evil by restoring the proper relative equilibrium where it has been disturbed. Let us consider what is this relative equilibrium of our triune organisms of soul, mind, and body. It is perfect action and reaction, and perfect action and reaction between the soul and its organs may be described as follows: The soul conceives, the mind perceives and constructs a form of expression, and the body expresses it. This is the order of action. Now, that which has been expressed is conveyed through the senses to the mind, and the mind conveys the impression thereof to the soul, which by that means recognizes its own power. This is the order of reaction. Each additional recognition of the soul means growth of consciousness, and the impulse for further expression increases with each expression. In other words, the more we express of essential power, the more we want to

express, as the desire for increase of consciousness grows by what it feeds on.

All of this relates to the natural impulse of expression. In dramatic expression, however, where the formula is already defined, the order is reversed. Here the initial action is from without, and not from within. The dramatic formula is conveyed through the senses to the mind, which perceives or determines what particular emotion is demanded by the formula, thus opening a definite channel of expression to the soul's emotion, which is ever ready with its crude impulse of self-manifestation embodied in will. In other words, an impression from the outer world must precede the expression from within.

The initial fulfilment of the law of action and reaction between soul and body, as described above, is the key-note of the orderly working of that law throughout the whole complexity of our physical organization. It not only strikes the key-note of nature's harmonies, but also swings the pendulum of nature's rhythms.

There is a wonderful law of sequence which prevails throughout the whole gamut of our threefold organism. If the law of action and reaction between soul and mind, in their emotional and mental relations, is perfectly carried out, the body, in the performance of its physical expression of action and reaction, follows suit, and an equally perfect active and reactive process takes place in the heart, the lungs, and throughout the

whole physical organism. If the soul-emotion acts as motor in an orderly way, through the passive mind, the lungs will also act as the physical motor of sound, as they should do, and the other vocal processes will follow in orderly succession. If, on the other hand, the mind acts on the body independently of the soul-emotions, the lungs will not do the whole of their duty, and some of the throat muscles will come impotently and vainly to the rescue, unless a correct automatism of the parts used in singing has been already firmly established by the singer.

This law of sequence in our triune organism will account for the fact that we frequently hear from those who have had no training whatever, and who are in a complete state of ignorance regarding the vocal processes, the most perfect tone-production.

Their limitations in other directions are, of course, apparent in their singing; but, as far as a free and unconscious delivery of tone is concerned, the untutored are often far ahead of the initiated. It is because the untutored are still under the influence of natural law, and because the mental processes have not yet begun to interfere. Their hour of consciousness must arrive, however; it is the ordeal every singer must go through; it is not to be avoided nor evaded. It is only by conquest we shall attain. We must acquire the power to achieve through a conscious knowledge of what is right that unconsciousness of process which

was originally ours through ignorance. In other words, we must consciously train our bodies to perform perfectly all the various actions demanded of them in the process of tone-production. We must train them, moreover, to the point that all these vocal processes will follow automatically, that is, without any conscious mental dictation or guidance. Thus the vocal instrument will respond to the will as instantaneously as the telegraph wires, which convey our message, respond to the battery. And let us bear in mind that our voice or instrument must remain as plastic to the will as the telegraph wires to the battery. Also, that our will bears the same relation to the soul's desire as the battery does to the telegraph operator.

This plasticity or passivity not only of the vocal organ, but of the whole body, is indispensable to a perfectly free tone-production. The body must be passive alike to action and to inaction. It must always be ready to act, but it must never anticipate the will. It must be to the will as the needle is to the magnet.

This is proper relative equilibrium between the will and the body, and this is what we must work for in order that the body, instead of being a limitation to the soul, shall express its depths of power and feeling in all its strength and in all its truth, and thereby fulfil its real mission, which is that of an unconscious interpreter of God to man.

CHAPTER V

SPONTANEITY THROUGH CONCENTRATION OF ENERGY

SPONTANEITY is a necessity for the highest expression of our emotions in singing. The lack of it is the barrier to that highest expression; therefore, it may be said that to achieve spontaneity of expression should be the first and principal aim of those who desire to attain their ideal in the art of singing.

The human voice has a peculiar language of its own, which, though it cannot be translated into any spoken language, reaches the higher, spiritual understanding far more directly than any spoken language possibly can. But this can only be when the voice reaches the outer world fresh, pure, and direct from the living spring of all emotions—spontaneous and true, free and unlimited as the soul itself, whose offspring it is.

Every human being has in him, at any given period of his life, a certain latent possibility of expression. This possibility cannot be increased or diminished in quantity or quality at any particular time, any more than his stature can be increased or diminished. To express perfectly, there-

fore, that whole possibility at any given moment, is all that can be done, all that can be asked. This possibility is, of course, not always the same in the life of the same person. The emotions of a youth, for instance, must be different in kind and degree from those of a mature man; but the spontaneous expression of those emotions, whatever they may be in kind or degree, is, for the time being, his highest possibility of expression. This sliding scale of possibilities is regulated by the existing capacity of the individual to recognize the measure of his own latent power. The power itself is the heritage of the human race in common, and is not apportioned with partiality to one rather than to another. We may say that there exists a common fund of crude power, from which each human being may draw unhindered as much as he chooses for himself. He whose aspirations are lofty will unconsciously draw heavily on the common fund; whereas he whose aims are low will draw but lightly. A man can be no greater than his ideal. His ideal expresses his own appropriation from the common fund of latent power for the time being. Let him then express that appropriation, whatever it may be. In other words, let him express all that is in him to express at the moment, and he will surely, after each expression, desire something more, something finer to express. This desire is a new draft on the common fund of latent power; it is a higher aspiration; it is a recognition of his heritage from the source of

all good. This is his opportunity for growth, for higher development. No one is shut out from the highest possibilities who dares to aspire, or who recognizes how much may be his for the asking. Meanwhile, as I said before, all he can do for the moment is to express what he is now; no more, no less; and to express that temporary reality with absolute directness. Let him not try to express the possibility of some one else; for this is false aspiration, or aspiration degraded to mere ambition, and will lead to a painful, conscious, and vain striving after something which is not and cannot be his. Absolute spontaneity of expression can never be reached until the mind comes to rest in the conviction that we cannot by any possibility—for the moment—be more than we are, or express more than we have in us to express at that moment. If, then, spontaneity of expression be the desideratum in singing, we may next consider what there is to prevent it. What stands in the way of that which would seem the most natural thing in the world? What barrier is there to be thrown down? What obstacle to be removed to allow this highest expression of our emotions in art? First of all, we say that some of our mental processes—for instance, the part of us which takes cognizance of how we do—come between us and the doing. To illustrate this further: we have power back of the will to do, of which power we are unconscious till the thing is done. In other words, the manifestation of this power is a neces-

sity to its recognition, and the will acts through the natural impulsion of the power itself. That power is the natural appropriation or existing possibility of the individual, of which we have before spoken. Like all natural forces, it seeks an outlet. It forces the will into action, which, in its turn, compels the mental and physical machinery to move. This is the perfection of expression, for it is unconscious and direct from its original source.

We have also the power to formulate to ourselves consciously, not only what we want to do, but how we are going to do it, and to take cognizance of the doing. In other words, the mind has a will of its own, which is conscious, and which often acts independently of the unconscious or essential will. Now, between our unconscious will and its expression comes this conscious mental formula, which obstructs the expression or outward manifestation of the essential or soul-will.

How, then, are we to get rid of this obstacle, this conscious obtruding of the mental processes between us and the spontaneous expression of our unconscious or latent power? To this we say—first of all, we must acquire a habit of passivity, or plasticity of body. We must forbid the mind to wander aimlessly, or impertinently into regions where it is simply a hinderance, and confine it to its proper sphere. We must compel it to an attitude of waiting for the impulse of the unconscious power back of the will. To say, "Do these things," is not enough. They must appear at the outset

mere phrases; therefore let us apply our principle, and consider how passivity of mind and body can be acquired. The answer is, by concentration of energy. Now, what do we mean by concentration of energy? We mean the whole of our energy, or consciousness, centred in one part, or one thing. And where should the energy or consciousness be concentrated? In the motor, which is the desire or emotional impulse itself which makes for utterance. Our mental consciousness can only be properly applied to one thing at a time. Any attempt to divide it must cause a weakening of energy in the motive power, for all energy must be concentrated to be available as motive power. We see this illustrated in every form of physical force or energy on the physical plane. Of what use is electricity in the form of lightning? None whatever; but, on the contrary, it is a dangerous and destructive force without concentration and without direction. When electricity is concentrated and properly directed, however, it becomes the most potent of all physical motors. The same rule applies to water, to steam, and so forth. And what is true of these unconscious physical forces is also true of the higher energy or consciousness of man. Perfect concentration of energy, then, is an identification of the mental consciousness with the desire which is back of will, a unification of the mental will and the essential will.

All other conscious mental processes, such as premonition, anticipation, imagination, observa-

tion, must be at rest; for, in a state of activity, each and all of these processes absorb energy which should belong to the motive power. For example, in singing, there must be no defining of any of the muscular or mechanical movements of the throat or of any other part of the body to be brought into play in the act of singing; there must be no premonitory idea of how the voice is going to sound; there must not even be a conscious premonition of pitch. Whether a premonition of pitch or concept of sound exists in a sub-consciousness, there is apparently no way of ascertaining; but it is a rational conclusion to infer that there is; as how otherwise would the passive vocal apparatus have a definite order to obey, as it certainly must have, where pitch and quality are constantly subject to modification? It is none the less a fact that the spontaneous utterance of tone by the voice involves apparently no mental consciousness whatsoever. In fact, so incalculable is the rapidity with which the voice executes the order of the will, that the question continually forces itself upon us whether the senses do not communicate through the nerve-fibres to the will the formula through which the emotion is expressed, without the agency of the mind? Whichever of these two inferences is correct, however, the fact remains the same, that in spontaneous singing the intelligence is only an affirmation of the desire for expression which impels the will to action. This affirmation constitutes unity of pur-

pose between mind and will, and it likewise means concentration of energy, where the body is also passive.

This term—concentration—often misleads the student, who is prone to regard it as an act, whereas it is rather a condition. Concentration of consciousness or energy does not involve drawing or gathering our scattered force and focussing it in one thing; the mere act of concentrating alone would in this case absorb so much energy that there would be but little left for the subject of concentration. Concentration simply means occupying ourselves with one thing, one idea, one act, or one impulse at a time, to the exclusion of everything else. All intrusive thought must be denied by a mental resolution. And this resolution involves no more energy than does the act of brushing a fly off a sheet of paper on which we are writing. We do not want the fly in that place, or at that moment, so we sweep it away. If it alights again, we remove it again, and if other flies alight, we remove them also. This is precisely the attitude of the mental will towards the intrusive mental processes, which are like the troublesome and importunate children of the mind when they interrupt their parent, who is communing with and acting as the organ of the silent soul. The mind, in concentrating, orders her intrusive children—whose names are Preconception, Anticipation, Imagination, and Observation—to be quiet. Could the mental will express itself in spoken lan-

guage, it would say to these intrusive thoughts, "Do not interrupt me; I do not want you now, for I am engaged in carrying out the orders of my beloved master; therefore peace, be still!"

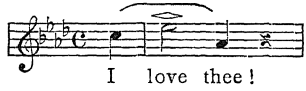
Concentration, otherwise interpreted, would prove a hinderance, because the endeavor to acquire the power of concentration by consciously focussing the mind on one thing, even if that thing be desire or soul-impulse, would produce a high degree of mental tension, which mental tension would impress the body, and the body would in its turn become over-tense. In this way, both mind and body would absorb energy which should be vested in the motor. Concentration of energy, then, is a perfect and complete union of mind and soul, of intelligence and desire. It is as though the soul said, "I desire to express myself," while simultaneously the mind says to the soul, "I desire to express you," and the body in its turn says, "I await my orders."

This expresses as nearly as language can do that unity, that singleness of purpose, which constitutes concentration of energy, which concentration includes passive obedience of both mind and body to the soul-impulse or will.

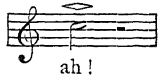
But, it may be objected, the laws I have here declared can only be applied to the spontaneous utterance of simple tone, and cannot belong to dramatic singing, where the emotions to be expressed are suggested or indicated by the poetical and musical formula. To this I say—that

every musical tone uttered by the human voice should convey to the outer world some emotion of the singer, whether it be attached to a word or not, whether that tone be a part of a musical phrase or only an isolated note.

As I have said in a preceding chapter, it is the function of the mind to formulate or to isolate from the great reservoir of emotion the particular emotion to be expressed. Now, when an isolated tone is sung, the emotion back of it is determined purely by mental selection. When the emotion is defined in advance, however, as in dramatic music, the formula is conveyed through the senses to the mind, which instantly seizes upon it and conveys that formula to the inorganic motor. This is the only difference in the process. The result in both cases is identical. Thus it will be easily perceived that the emotion, say, of love could be conveyed with equal truth and spontaneity alike in the phrase,



and in the isolated note,



If singers would only bear this fact in mind and apply this rule, by formulating an emotion for every note or group of notes, in exercising the voice, the power of dramatic expression they would acquire would be simply marvellous, because they would thereby familiarize themselves

with the alphabet of true dramatic expression, which alphabet would in time be applied as easily and as unconsciously as the verbal alphabet is applied to language by the orator.* That the gain in spontaneity of dramatic expression through such practice would be incalculable it would seem hardly necessary to state, for here we have described what is a quasi-automatism in the mental process or formula, which quasi-automatism leaves the will-impulse as free and powerful to act as if there were no dramatic formula to be conveyed to the mind through the senses, in order to direct the action of the will.

Such a degree of spontaneity impresses one in its effect as though the will and the physical act of singing were one and the same thing. There is no separate consciousness of cause and effect. Cause and effect become simply one and the same thing, manifested simultaneously on different planes of existence, or we may call it the physical expression of the emotion simultaneous with the emotional impulse itself. Nothing has ever been expressed in language which conveys to our minds a more perfect impression of spontaneity, regarded as a unification of will and expression, than the sentence, "Let there be light, and there was light." Had this act of creation been worded, "Let there be light, and light appeared," the effect of absolute spontaneity or simultaneousness

* See Chapter II., Part III., on the Scale of the Emotions.

of will and its outward manifestation would be lost. This leads naturally to the statement that spontaneity is intrinsically both cause and effect in a single expression. The causal element is concentrated energy, the effectual element is spontaneity of expression.

To conclude, spontaneity is only to be attained by establishing a singleness of purpose throughout our triune organism, which singleness of purpose represents concentration of energy. When mind is united in perfect harmony with soul, the union is procreative, the offspring is—truth.

CHAPTER VI

AUTOMATISM

It is absolutely indispensable to spontaneous expression in art that the technique, or all that relates to the process of expression, be thoroughly mastered and subjugated, so that neither the process of expression nor the parts used in that process may obtrude themselves or enter into the consciousness during expression. This is especially true of singing. The singer must be no more conscious of the physical processes during the act of singing than the orator is conscious of the letters of the alphabet which form the words that are flowing from his eloquent lips. The reason for this is, that to obtain a perfectly spontaneous utterance in singing there must be no division of consciousness; the whole consciousness must be centred in the motive power or will. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to establish a correct automatism in all the parts brought into play in singing. Now, what do we mean by correct automatism? We mean the perfect and spontaneous action of all the physical processes, separately, relatively, and as a whole, without direction of the intelligence. So firmly should this correct au-

tomatism be established, that the parts or physical processes employed should represent a perfectly equipped, finely balanced, and nicely adjusted machine, capable and ready to perform every variation in action which may be required of it instantly on application of the motive power.

Not only should the physical machine act independently of the intelligence, but also without conscious guidance from the will, because the will is concerned, not with the machine itself, but only with the work produced by the machine. In other words, the will demands an expression, without being concerned as to how it is expressed or what expresses it. This necessity of establishing once for all in the body a correct automatism which will be permanent, from which there can be no backsliding, is of such vital importance to spontaneity and truth of expression that it cannot be stated too positively, nor repeated too often, nor emphasized too earnestly. He who would express himself directly and truthfully in song must lose no time in pressing automatism into his service. He must make it his friend, his willing slave, as otherwise it will remain a powerful and relentless enemy. An enemy without intelligence, it is true, but brutish in its strength and mulish in its obstinacy; an enemy which will negative and frustrate every good impulse and every beautiful aspiration.

Automatism is more generally known under the familiar name of "force of habit," and there is no

one who has not at some time in his life realized this force by personal experience in the character of a dangerous enemy.

Is there any one who has not tried to reform some habit, some fault in manner, some inelegance of speech or gait or attitude, some ungentleness or hastiness of temper, and who, despite the desire for reform, despite even the resolution for reform, has found himself drawn away from his purpose by the relentless force of habit? Yet his reason was convinced that reform was necessary; and, moreover, he has honestly desired to conquer the old habit, but could not. The old habit was strong, and he was weak. The fight was not an equal one. Why not? Because his will was powerless against the yet unvanquished foe, who had day by day grown stronger, more despotic, and more invincible since his safe instalment in the human citadel; a mighty foe, a pitiless foe, a veritable monster, automatism. And how does this automatic monster invade us and take possession of our unwary faculties, even to the routing of the will itself! The enemy does not come heralded by fifes and drums and trumpets, nor does he appear at our gates in full regimentals and armed *cap-à-pie*, but he presents himself, like many another foe, insidiously, or even in the garb of a friend. Let us seek a practical illustration of how this enemy, this incorrect automatism, establishes itself in our physical processes. We begin, first of all, by permitting something which is undesirable,

in bad taste, or not in harmony with natural law, either through ignorance, heedlessness, imitation, or because of some temporary physical weakness or initial defect; for example, a mispronunciation of certain words; a high-pitched, unmusical, or vulgar tone of voice; a nasal drawl in speech; a stooping of the shoulders, and so forth *ad infinitum*. A continuance in these soon becomes a habit, and the longer we continue to indulge the habit the more firmly it establishes itself, until finally it becomes unconscious—in other words, automatic. The physical processes brought into play by the act now operate not only without direction from the intelligence, but also without volition. In other words, they continue to do the thing they have been in the habit of doing, and go of themselves like a clock which is wound up. Now, let us suppose that our attention is called to the bad effects of this habit. First, it is difficult to make us realize that there exists any such habit, because it has become unconscious; but when we do at last realize its existence, we become at once desirous, nay, eager, to check it, but with most discouraging results; for while it is our intention, our earnest desire, not to repeat the act, we find to our chagrin that the forbidden act has repeated itself without our volition or knowledge, and that in spite of our good resolutions, it still continues to repeat itself again and again *ad nauseam*, Here we have a clearly defined and a common every-day case of automatism. Now why is this?

Because not only do the physical processes operate by themselves without any direction of the intelligence, but because also the mental volition now operates unconsciously or automatically and without impulse from the essential will. In other words, without desire back of it. I hold this view for the reason that were not the mental volition itself also involved in automatism, there would be nothing to hinder our abandoning any habit, no matter of how long standing, as soon as the veritable desire to do so was awakened; because the body is subject to the mind, and mind is, according to the scheme of nature, subject to the will. Thus, to *desire* a change of habit would be a peremptory order from will to mind, from master to servant, which must be obeyed but for the fact that the servant is already taken prisoner by the enemy, and is under bondage to that despot among despots—automatism, and therefore cannot serve its master, the will, in fulfilling the soul's desire, which is, that its instrument of expression, the body, should abandon the evil habit and establish the good one. So here we have a master who can only will, who can only command, but who cannot act without his organ of action; and here we have the organ of action crippled, disabled, utterly incapacitated, utterly useless because of a resisting automatism.

This condition suggests very vividly Paul's expression in his Epistle to the Romans, "For what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that

do I." And again, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." Was not Paul describing the newly born aspiration for the good and the beautiful frustrated by the old habits already established in the flesh and in the "carnal mind"? Surely what Paul observed, even in those remote days, was nothing more or less than this same law of automatism so firmly established in the body and mind that the tardy impulse towards the good and the true could not prevail against it.

We see this law of automatism illustrated in a thousand different ways, both in our moral, mental, and physical organisms. Do we not often see people whose faces, in consequence, perhaps, of troubles and hardships suffered in the past, wear an habitual expression of care and anxiety, although their present condition is one of perfect ease and contentment? They are happy, but look miserable; they have nothing to trouble them, but look as if they were responsible for the welfare of the entire universe. We have here another instance of automatism, expressing itself both in the physical and mental organisms. The anxious lines are not only established in the flesh, but the habit of taking life hard has also installed itself in the mind, and, in consequence, an expression of care and discontent belies the real existing condition of ease and happiness.

We see this law of automatism again manifest-

ing itself in unconscious nature. Has it not been proved that there exist in our bodies certain parts which have no function in our physical organization, but which are simply survivals of a former and a lower stage of evolution? The intestinal sac, appendix cæci, is one instance of this; for not only is it of no use whatever in our organism, but its existence is liable to produce dangerous conditions, frequently death. There is also a ligament in the hand, a slip of the extensor, which, it is said, is a survival of the paw which served some of our more primitive ancestors in the same capacity as our hands now serve us. Again, this survival is a hinderance to the free use of the fourth finger. What are these but habits of expression which nature has not yet sloughed off, in spite of the fact that the human family has raised itself beyond the state where such expressions are harmonious with the rest of the creature.

Automatism establishes itself not only in the individual, but also in the generations. When it shows itself in the generations, and is handed down from father to son, and again to grandson, in the form of some trait, some blemish, or some disease, we call it the law of heredity; but it is, in reality, nothing more or less than automatism, which has established itself in a line of progenitors, and which persists and reproduces itself until some new fusion of blood or some intelligent and potent counteracting influence is brought to bear upon it.

I have thus far enlarged on automatism only in the character of an enemy, because it is in that character that we are all of us the most familiar with it; for we are, every one of us when we begin our education, more or less handicapped by some pernicious habits, either inherited or acquired. The inherited habits we call inborn; acquired and long-established habits we call second nature; but heredity, second nature, and force of habit, so called, are all one and the same thing, automatism, though different in degree and length of standing. Automatism, whether it manifests itself in heredity, in second nature, or in force of habit, is a power which works independently of our consciousness, independently of our volition.

I could cite many interesting examples of automatism manifesting itself in a large variety of ways; but I refrain from doing so, as it would lead me too far away from the art of singing. I have already cited enough instances to serve my purpose, which is that the reader may identify automatism wherever he may meet it.

But though automatism, by virtue of its intrinsic nature, must necessarily act independently of the will, it certainly need not and must not be permitted to act in opposition to it; therefore it follows that the will must conquer it; the will must train it; and when trained, the will must trust it.

Let us now consider what automatism can do for us in singing if we make it our friend. First, it takes the whole responsibility of the vocal proc-

esses off our hands. Once establish a correct automatism in the vocal instrument and its controlling muscles, and in the physical motor, the lungs, and their controlling muscles, and the fact that all the parts work perfectly of themselves, without either guidance or attention, frees the consciousness, which, instead of diffusing itself, concentrates in the will.

There are but few who realize what tremendous potency there is in the feeling which shapes itself in "I want," followed by "I will," when that feeling is energized by the whole concentrated consciousness. It is on this concentrated consciousness that depends spontaneity of expression. Without such concentration there can be no perfect spontaneity, and, consequently, no true expression of the emotions.

Not only does a perfect automatism help us by freeing our consciousness, but it also rescues us from failure in certain emergencies. For instance, in cases where the automatism of memory is for an instant arrested or obstructed—which frequently occurs to actors when they are performing in public—the physical organs of voice and articulation will continue to do what they have been in the habit of doing, and thus tide over the lapse of memory until it once more recovers its normal action. In the above we have an instance of the physical automatism reacting on the mental. Many instances could also be cited of the mental automatism acting on the physical by association. I

will cite one example by way of illustration. An old and experienced operatic singer who had long since retired from the stage, and whose voice had undeniably passed into history, was called upon, under some unusual circumstances, to fill a rôle which had in the old days been a favorite one with him. On finding himself once more upon the stage with the old conditions and the old surroundings, his voice responded to the demands made upon it exactly as it had done before he left the stage, although, had he attempted to sing an aria from that opera in a drawing-room, it would have been impossible for him to do so acceptably. In his case, the mind was impressed by the familiar conditions, which conditions were associated with an efficient operation of the vocal processes. The mind, therefore, both reacted on the will and acted on the body, starting into play once more the old automatism. Here was indeed an instance of automatism in the character of a friend, and a right faithful friend too!

It is needless to multiply instances of automatism in its multifarious manifestations, as the reader will doubtless recall many other examples in his or her own experience. I have already said enough to show that it is not only desirable but necessary for the singer to both cultivate and establish once for all a correct automatism of the vocal processes. Let us therefore now inquire how this can be accomplished. First, how to get rid of the bad habits with which we are all more

or less hampered when we begin our education. For I may say with truth, that in all my experience I have never met or heard of a singer who, on beginning to study, had no bad habits to overcome. If we wish to make new folds in a piece of cloth which has been badly creased, or folded unevenly, what do we do first? We remove the creases by pressing the cloth with a flat-iron till the surface becomes smooth again, and then we make our new folds. We must remove the creases, or bad habits established in our bodies, by relaxing the muscles which govern the offending parts till they become passively obedient to the will, for passivity of the vocal processes represents the smoothness in the cloth, which is a necessity before it can be folded anew. In order to accomplish this, we must employ the whole consciousness in the relaxing of the resisting muscles, and for this reason it should be undertaken, at first, independently of singing, because, until the parts or vocal processes are subdued into perfect passivity, there can be no correct habits established in those parts. Moreover, as this necessity for concentration of the whole consciousness on the body is the reverse of what is necessary in singing, where the entire consciousness should be centred in the motor or desire for expression which is back of will, it follows that while this relaxing process is being pursued, there can be no singing, as such.*

* This matter will be treated more practically and more

It is of little or no consequence, therefore, what is the nature of the existing bad habits, as all bad habits, without exception, are only felt as a resistance of natural law, and therefore, by a general relaxing of all resisting muscles, the singer is brought to a natural and proper starting-point, whence he can at once proceed to assert his own individuality in expression. If you wish to write a poem on your slate, but find that somebody has scribbled all over it, and therefore it would not be legible, what do you do? You wipe the slate clean, and then proceed to write your poem legibly. Does it matter what was written on the slate before you cleaned it? Does it matter whether it was covered with profane sentences or hideous pictures? Certainly not. Once clean your slate, and that which was written on it leaves no mark. To relax all unnatural tension and thus bring the body to passivity, is to wipe your slate clean. When that is done, everything is possible to the singer, who may then trust wholly in the soul's desire for expression to energize the will. The will in its turn, acting on its instrument, the body, in accordance with the formula dictated by the mind, will obtain from the body that expression with perfect spontaneity, and the expression or tone itself will be charged with life and truth, fresh and pure from its original source, the soul.

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in detail in Part II. Special exercises will also be given, with full directions for practising them.

A continuance in the production of such tones will soon result in the automatic action and reaction of will, mind, and body in orderly relation with each other. Thus will the consciousness be free, and therefore naturally concentrate wholly in the motor or desire for expression. Thus will spontaneity of expression become absolute, and the voice tell us what no spoken language ever could of essential life, of immortal truth; it will tell us of the Divine wisdom and love itself.

Part II.

MECHANISM AND TECHNIQUE

CHAPTER I

MECHANISM

In laying so great a stress on the higher faculties employed in singing, I wish by no means to ignore or to belittle what properly belongs to mechanism. After all, there is the machine, and that machine is the vehicle by which the emotions are expressed, and we should therefore respect it accordingly. I hold, however, that in order to acquire a perfect mechanism, it is not so necessary to train the parts used in singing to perform any specific actions, as it is to bring about a thorough relaxing of all unnatural tension in the parts of the body where it exists, thus freeing the vocal processes from bad habits, either inborn or acquired; this will render them passively obedient to the will, and ready to execute instantaneously any and all of the infinite variety of motions and adjustments which may be required in the process of singing. What all of these required adjustments may be, no one can tell; they are too numerous, subtile, and complicated, and subject to too many and various modifications for the human intelligence, even in its present high state of development, to grasp.

Many interesting and valuable discoveries have been made by means of the laryngoscope, which discoveries are, or ought to be, immensely helpful to teachers, in so far as, by means of a clearer knowledge of certain causes and their specific effects, they can direct the pupil more intelligently how to practise in order to overcome glaring defects in tone-production, instead of groping their way and experimenting blindly. When all that laryngoscopy has achieved is summed up, however, no more is really understood of the process of tone-production, as a whole, than of the law of life from the anatomical study of the human body. When, after patient and faithful investigations, the anatomist formulates his table of laws about the human organism, he has to leave out of his calculations the whole nervous system, of which he knows but little or nothing, except by inference. And yet this same nervous system is the most active force in organic man, both for good and for evil.

There are such broad margins to the legibly written laws of nature, on which margins such an infinite number of supplementary laws are written in invisible ink—laws of compensation and of adaptation—that unless these invisible laws could be deciphered and taken into consideration as well as the visible laws, no adequate understanding of the whole process of singing could be reached. I hold, therefore, that a knowledge of physiology is of little practical value to the singer, as such. Nay,

more: that such knowledge, unless its limitations are fully appreciated, is deceptive, often misleading.

A foreman in a piano factory who is thoroughly acquainted with the whole mechanism of a pianoforte, in detail, as a whole, and in its relation to quality of sound; who has knowledge enough to enable him to pull to pieces the entire action of a pianoforte and put it together again, is, nevertheless, no better equipped for a pianist than any raw youth who does not know the difference between the hammers and the dampers. Yet the knowledge which the foreman possesses of the pianoforte mechanism far surpasses in exactness that which we can hope to attain of our vocal mechanism.

Perfection in tone-production is to be achieved by a long series of tentative expressions, which expressions must be referred, through the ear, to the higher consciousness, until the ideal expression of the individual is reached.

There exist, however, certain important and far-reaching laws, apparent to the close observer, which laws bear immediately on nature's obvious intention regarding the use of the vocal instrument and its motive power, the breath.

These laws it is necessary for the singer of to-day to understand, if for no other reason, that the mind may come to rest about processes which would otherwise obtrude themselves sooner or later on the consciousness, thus preventing passivity of body, concentration of mind, and, in conse-

quence, defeating spontaneity of expression. Let us then consider these laws.

The principal and most important part of mechanism, broadly speaking, is breathing, inasmuch as breath is the physical motor of sound. On it depends the initial vibration of the vocal cords or ligaments. When the initial vibration is perfect (as it must be if the action of the breath on healthy vocal ligaments is correct), it strikes, as it were, the key-note of harmony between all the other processes, which fall at once into accord and into rhythm one with the other. Were this not the case, singing would be an impossibility, for no human brain could regulate or even perceive the manifold and diverse modifications that are constantly taking place in the different parts of the vocal organ.

If we look at any piece of machinery in action, where the whole is exposed to view, we cannot observe all the different parts at once; but what we *do* observe is, that all the different parts work in harmonious and rhythmic relation the one with the other, in response to the proper application of the motive power. In this our physical instrument resembles any other machine, and therefore, as such, it must not only have the motive power properly applied, but the machine itself must be cared for, and kept in good order. As we should avoid exposing a machine in a damp place where it would rust, so should we avoid exposing our bodies to unfavorable conditions. And as, when

a machine is out of order and will not work properly in all its parts, we shut off the motor, that we may look to it and oil the wheels and do whatever else may be necessary, so must we also stop singing when we become conscious of effort, which is itself the outcome of a reluctance of some part of our vocal machine to perform its function, and find out what is the matter with it, and then apply the remedy. Great harm is done by persisting in the attempt to sing when any reluctance on the part of the vocal processes manifests itself. In such cases, rest is the first and safest remedy, because in this living machine of ours there are certain accommodating processes which can be brought into play by using greater physical or nervous force to compel expression. These accommodating processes are irregular, and are not in the natural and normal order of things. Singing, therefore, under such forced conditions often results in starting, if not in establishing, a false and pernicious automatism which is very hard to overcome. Innumerable promising young singers have had brilliant careers cut short from just this cause and no other. Once start a disturbance in the normal physical processes, and a complementary disturbance in the mental processes ensues, in accordance with the law of action and reaction which is forever asserting itself in our organism. Utter confusion and helplessness to set things right, or even to find out what is the matter, is the result to the young singer, with consequent

discouragement. From this moment the tendency is downward, unless arrested by the intelligence, the patience, and the persistency of an expert, supplemented by the faithful and courageous co-operation of the singer.

We will now proceed to consider carefully this subject of breathing.

CHAPTER II

BREATHING

It has often been said that to breathe perfectly is to breathe *naturally*, and this statement is absolutely true. But what do we mean by breathing naturally? Do we mean breathing as we are in the habit of doing when we are not conscious of the act? Certainly not, because almost universally that would be breathing according to the bundle of habits that we have contracted from childhood up, through various abuses and perversions, and not according to nature, or the simple fulfilment of natural law.

I do not think I need use any arguments to prove that we are *not* living our lives according to natural law, as that fact has been too long and too firmly established to require further proof. If we were really natural, it would suffice to say, Pay no attention whatever to the process of breathing, but let the act be *unconscious;* for if unconscious, it will be natural, and if natural, it will be perfect, as Nature works perfectly when left to herself. But that is unfortunately not the case, for we are, in point of fact, constantly at cross-purposes with natural law, owing largely to the unnecessary ten-

sion we are using in every act of our lives, no matter how simple, which tension is doubtless the physical expression of the high pressure under which we are living. Now this tension is in itself a negation of the natural law of action and reaction which governs not only the act of breathing, but every other physical process. Tension asserts itself as a *resistance* to this law, destroying its regularity and its beautiful rhythm, and rendering the act of breathing, which is the physical expression of the law of life, labored and difficult. The habit of unnatural tension has now established itself so firmly in our organisms that it has become *automatic*. We are most of the time using excessive tension of both nerve and muscle without being in the least conscious of it. Unconsciously we *hold* the diaphragm in a fixed position while thinking intently or reading or writing, thus hindering the regular and rhythmic action of expansion and contraction for fifteen or twenty seconds at a time. This must of course have a bad effect on the health; the blood cannot be properly oxygenized, and therefore there must be loss of strength and energy. All this is to call attention to the fact that, no matter how it has come about, we find ourselves to-day through the habit of unnecessary tension unconsciously breathing *unnaturally*. The art of breathing, therefore, now consists in regaining the faculty of inflating the lungs naturally, that is, easily, freely, and rhythmically.*

* See Part III., page 162, on Rhythmic Breathing.

The regaining of this faculty must not be confounded with the artificial method of breathing so universal among the singers of to-day, and which is the result of conventionalized error; I mean the practice of *deliberately and consciously working the diaphragm* in the acts of expansion and contraction. This is most distinctly to be avoided. What is required in breathing is expansion *without* unnecessary tension. The lungs must fill themselves in proportion as the breath is exhausted, under the regulation of their own law, that of action and reaction, and *not* by any *conscious regulating* of the diaphragm on the part of the singer, as this leads inevitably to a mechanical and unspontaneous production of tone.

Singers will understand me better if I say there must be no *holding*, no *tightness* anywhere, but the frame of the body must remain plastic or passive to the natural acts of inhaling and exhaling, as in this way only can perfect freedom of vocal expression be obtained. The amount of breath expended in the production of a tone must be regulated by the quality of the tone itself; and the quality of the tone regulated by the will-impulse of the singer; which impulse, let us remember, is emotional, not mental nor physical. If the will-impulse be for a vigorous utterance, the tone will be full and resonant, and the breath will pour itself out in sound freely and generously. If the impulse be to utter a soft and gentle tone, the breath will express itself more slowly and will

consequently last longer. In both cases the diaphragm is brought into play as an automatic regulator: but it is subject only to the tone during the act of singing, and to the breath in inhaling, and the will of the singer should only act on it (by indirection) *through* the tone, and not *directly* or *consciously*. The diaphragm, then, must be plastic or passive to the breath during the act of inhaling, and equally passive to the tone in the act of singing. In order to obtain this condition of passivity, the whole body must be in a state of proper equilibrium, *without* unnecessary tension. The frame of the chest, and also the whole abdomen, must feel easy; in other words, perfectly free. In order to guard against misapprehension, I wish to state this same law in other language. The diaphragm must not take the *initiative* in the process of expansion, but must follow, or act simultaneously with the expansion of the lungs as they fill with air. To cause the diaphragm to act first is both to hurry and to force the natural process, and this produces both hardness and limitation of tone, as well as lack of repose.

If the tone is uttered or struck at the precise moment that the breath is given up, a perfectly clear, bell-like, and positive attack, as of a note struck sharply on the piano, will be the result, and the effect will be both restful and delightful. Moreover, the tone will expand, travel, and fill not only the largest auditorium, but what is better, it will also fill the auditor.

If the body remains in a state of proper equilibrium, and absolutely free from unnatural tension, the breath in entering the body will, as a matter of course, seek that part of the lungs in which a vacuum has been created, and the influx of air itself will bring about unaided the descent of the diaphragm, the expansion of the floating ribs, and afterwards of the upper ribs, as a natural consequence of inbreathing. Let us guard against confusing cause and effect. The diaphragm naturally acts in the process of expansion because of and in response to the air that enters the lungs; the air does not enter the lungs because of the action of the diaphragm. Again, it is a common error to suppose that unless we hold the breath back in singing, or regulate it at the diaphragm, it will spend itself too freely and too quickly. But how can that be possible? The breath cannot escape too freely while the vocal cords are approximated in the act of tone-production, as during that act they are to the breath what a siphon is in a bottle of champagne. You do not regulate the amount of champagne to be drawn off at the bottle itself, but simply at the siphon, although the tendency of the gaseous liquid is to make its way out just as our breath tries to do; but, as the stop-cock of the siphon prevents the outflowing of the champagne, so do our approximated vocal cords keep back the breath until it is converted into tone-vibration, in which form only can it effect an exit. Now it

stands to reason that a column of air which by its own inherent impulse seeks an outlet, and in so doing compels the resisting ligaments to vibrate, should be allowed free scope to fulfil its function, and not be held in restraint.

Yet singers are continually falling into this error, in the belief that it is necessary to *economize* the breath and dole it out a little at a time lest it should all escape at once.

More than half the time, when singers appear to be out of breath, they still have really more than enough; but in consciously regulating its controlling muscles they prevent the breath from acting freely and normally on the vocal cords, so that the tone wanes, weakens, and fades out in an untimely manner, not because the breath is exhausted, but simply because of the improper restraint put on its natural impulse to get out of the body.

The point, then, on which I differ from other authorities is simply this: I contend that the degree of expansion in inhaling and of contraction in exhaling should *not* be consciously regulated by the singer; that the abdomen will expand to the breath as it enters the body, provided the body be not unnaturally tense, just as a rubber bulb with a mouth-piece in it will expand after a vacuum has been created in it, when left to itself. In order to expel the air from the rubber bulb artificial pressure is, of course, necessary, or it would remain full forever, rubber being a dead, though elastic, substance. But not so with the

body, which is not only elastic, but also has life, and consequently the natural impulse to expand and contract to the breath of life on its incoming and outgoing in an orderly way.

My plea is for the absolute *passivity* of the body to the law of life as it asserts itself in action and reaction, which in this case is expressed in expansion and contraction; for not meddling with any of the natural processes of our organs; for not attempting to assist Nature to do what she can accomplish without help, any more than we should think of trying to assist a clock by swinging the pendulum to and fro.

I urge that, in attempting to regulate natural processes, we are wasting energy which should be wholly centred in the will-impulse to utter the sound (or tone-impulse, as we may prefer to express it); that without such concentration of energy the tone cannot be properly vitalized, and that in consequence it will be mechanical and without power to move or thrill the listener. With a conscious mechanical process there can be no spontaneous utterance of the emotions, and it is precisely the *spontaneous* utterance that is the desideratum in singing, regarded from the highest standpoint.

I am quite willing to admit, nevertheless, that by becoming skilful in the *conscious* regulating of the breath a more or less acceptable tone-production may be attained; but what I do assert is, that the *highest* and *truest* expression of the soul's emotions can never be reached in that way.

CHAPTER III

THE THROAT IN BREATHING

DURING the act of breathing, absolute stillness of the larynx, and consequently of the tongue, is necessary.

In breathing through the nose with the mouth open, the tongue is apt to rise, and when the tone follows, it lowers itself again. Both of these movements are unnecessary and most unfavorable to a good attack.

In breathing through the mouth, on the other hand, the tongue lowers itself, and this also produces serious disturbance in the attack, and besides often induces flatness of intonation by causing the larynx to descend below the point required for certain notes.

There are other evils attending mouth-breathing which it is not necessary to specify here; let it suffice to say, that on no account is mouth-breathing to be encouraged. All inhaling should be through the nose, and only in cases where there is some malformation or obstruction in the nasal passage is nose-breathing impracticable. It is necessary, therefore, to acquire the habit of breathing through the nose with the mouth open and

with the tongue perfectly still and relaxed. The tongue must not be held still or in a fixed position, but it must be trained to *remain* still during breathing, that it may be ready for any action that may be demanded of it in singing, where it is called upon to go through an endless variety of motions demanding the greatest flexibility and readiness.

The tongue can easily be induced to remain still and passive during nose-breathing with the mouth open, if the soft palate is properly exercised so that it becomes flexible; for there will be no impulse for the tongue to rise and protect the throat in breathing through the nose with open mouth, if the palate spontaneously does its duty by falling, and thus protecting it.

After the above statements the question now arises, what should breathing represent to the accomplished singer? The answer is, reaction. The process of inhaling and its accompanying expansion should only be regarded by the singer as a moment of reaction from singing, for which the minimum of consciousness is required; a reaction which we desire, and which will take place without our interfering with the process.

Such a view of the process of inbreathing can, of course, only prevail when perfect physical passivity is attained.* Where it does prevail, however, the beautiful repose and the spontaneity of

* See Part III., Ch. III., on Action and Inaction.

attack that it engenders in the singer are indescribable in their impressiveness and effectiveness.

These are the laws which are indispensable to *natural* breathing, and it should be the aim of the singer so to establish the habit of obeying them, by persistent practice, that Nature will reassert herself and work, as was originally intended, in a simple and orderly way, not through the conscious volition of the singer, but *automatically*.

It is unfortunately impossible to change from a perverted automatism to a correct one without first going through a conscious process of change. A thorough comprehension of these laws will not be enough to conquer established faults. There must be a diligent and faithful application of them in daily practice, till they become thoroughly incorporated.

Supposing you are anxious to reach a certain place; you inquire the way; you receive minute directions as to when to turn to the right or the left, or when to walk straight on; you are warned to avoid such and such a swamp, and not to lose courage when you are in the midst of a dense forest. You understand the directions thoroughly, but will your understanding alone bring you to your goal? No, certainly not. You must walk every step of the way, and experience in your own person what your guide has told you. So it is with art, as in fact with everything worth achieving. We must fight our own battles and obtain our own conquests.

The question arises as to the best way of practising in order to obtain the desired results.

Of course, to a certain extent each student must discover for himself the method best suited to him, but there are some general rules that can be laid down for guidance—for example: Many of the things which appertain purely to mechanism, and to rendering the different parts of the vocal instrument capable and ready to do what is required of them, should be practised in the form of gymnastics and without vocal sound. The reason for this is, that if you bend your whole energy to accustoming your body to work properly until nature shall have reasserted itself so that it will perform its duties, as it should do, automatically as well as correctly, it will continue to do the same when you sing without watching.

Another reason for overcoming physical defects or bad habits by means of silent exercises is, that you require all your consciousness directed to your body when you are training it to obedience; but when you sing, on the contrary, your consciousness must most distinctly be withdrawn from your body and its processes, and centred in the will, which seeks expression *through* its now willing and plastic instrument. Your consciousness cannot be centred at one and the same time in both process and purpose; therefore first complete your process and then devote yourself wholly to your purpose. In other words, first render your servant capable to do the work required, then sim-

ply indicate *what* is to be done, not *how* it is to be done, for that he already knows. Do not watch him while he does it, but instead, trust him to do it.

Your body is the servant; you have fitted it for singing: it will sing for you when it is your will to express yourself in song.

CHAPTER IV

SILENT EXERCISES, AND HOW TO PRACTISE THEM

No. 1. Lie flat on your back (preferably on the floor, and without a pillow), giving up your whole weight to the floor; legs apart, arms open. See that every part of the body is properly relaxed and free. Draw a deep breath through the nose slowly and gently. The abdomen will expand first; then the floating ribs, the upper ribs, and lastly the chest. When the lungs are full, let the breath out freely by opening the glottis and mouth, as in uttering a deep sigh. In exhaling, the abdomen should relax first, in which case the chest will remain expanded until the last. Guard well against *helping* to expel the breath by consciously working any of the contracting muscles, and also against consciously holding the chest in a state of expansion by maintaining a grip on the chest muscles. The chest expansion will maintain itself naturally and unaided where there is no improper tension elsewhere. (The body should remain passive to the outgoing as to the ingoing of the breath.) Repeat this exercise several times.

No. 2. Inhale gently through the nose as be-

fore, and when the lungs are full, close the teeth, and permit the breath to get out as freely as it can, while making the voiceless sound *sh* (as in the word "hush"). Understand that the sole impediment to the breath should be made by the teeth, and not by regulating the breathing muscles. These must be left as free to contract as in the first exercise. You will observe, in following these directions, that the breath will exhaust itself very slowly—in fact, much more so than if you try to regulate it at the diaphragm. Repeat this several times.

No. 3. Inhale slowly (always through the nose). Hold the breath from ten to fifteen seconds. Exhale freely, as in No. 1.

No. 4. Inhale quickly. Hold the breath as before. Exhale through the closed teeth, as in No. 2.

Repeat these four exercises in a standing position. (The body should be in a state of perfect equilibrium, the whole weight thereof being thrown on the feet.)

No. 5. Stand in front of a looking-glass. Open the mouth wide (without stretching), so that you can see well the back of the throat. Inhale gently through the nose and exhale through the mouth, making the voiceless sound *heh*. This should be done rhythmically, occupying about one second for each act. (The tongue should remain flat and still during both the processes of inhaling and exhaling.) See to it that the soft palate falls regularly when you inhale, and that it rises when you

exhale. The body, meanwhile, must be free and relaxed, without the slightest unnecessary tension anywhere.

HOW TO GAUGE UNNATURAL TENSION

It is always difficult to realize exactly how much tension properly belongs to expansion and how much is excessive. Yet it is very important that the singer should know what it is to have the lungs inflated without any muscular strain or any feeling of tightness or discomfort. By trying the following exercise, which is meant rather as a practical demonstration than as a gymnastic, the singer will discover what is meant by expansion without unnecessary tension.

Close the mouth, and draw a deep breath through the nostrils. When the lungs are well inflated and the whole frame of the body normally expanded, close the nostrils with the thumb and forefinger, so that no breath can escape, and while the breath is confined in the body, say, during the space of about ten seconds, loosen or relax the whole frame of the body as much as possible without giving up the breath, then open the mouth and sigh out the breath.

In repeating this exercise several times, it will soon become apparent how much of the tension habitually used in breathing was superfluous.

The following exercises are quoted from "Voice, Song, and Speech," by Lennox Browne and Emil Behnke (chapter on Resonance), with some slight

modifications, which have reference, however, only to the manner of practising them.

No. 1. "Open the mouth widely, put out the tongue slowly, and draw it back gently, letting it lie flat and low, but touching the lower teeth all round. Repeat several times. In this as well as in the remaining tongue-exercises great care must be taken to keep the lips and lower jaw perfectly still."

No. 2. "Put the tip of the tongue against the lower front teeth, and then push it out gently as far as possible; this will, of course, completely roll it up. Then draw it back gently, as in exercise No. 1. Repeat several times."

No. 3. "Keep the root of the tongue as flat as you can, raise the tip, and raise it perpendicularly and quite slowly towards the roof of the mouth. Then lower it again gradually, until it has once more assumed its original position."

No. 4. "Raise the tip of the tongue, as in exercise No. 3, and move it gradually from one side to the other so that the highest point of it describes a semicircle. . Repeat several times."

In the practice of these exercises I would recommend, however, the greatest *gentleness*. In opening the mouth wide, avoid the sensation of stretching. In putting out the tongue, let it be as far as possible, without stretching. All the parts should be relaxed, and each motion an act of will rather than a conscious muscular action. This will greatly lessen, or do away entirely with, any

fatigue attending this practice, and a far greater flexibility of the parts will result.

I would impress on the mind of the reader that the above tongue-gymnastics are not for the purpose of strengthening the muscles, but rather for the purpose of relaxing all unnatural tension in the muscles and of rendering them flexible, free, and plastic to the will. Moreover, I only recommend their practice in cases where a strong habit has been contracted of pressing down the tongue at the root, or holding it in a fixed position, and where such habit has become unconscious. But in cases where there is no bad habit established, I do not advise the practice of these tongue-exercises at all.

When plasticity of the parts is achieved, it will be comparatively easy to acquire the correct action of these in combination with the vocal processes, by which means the singer will speedily establish a perfect technique which shall become automatic.

CHAPTER V

REGISTERS

THE different registers of the voice should be regarded by the singer as only so many modifications in the quality of tone, which modifications are inherent in the voice itself.

These modifications in quality are not to be brought about by conscious adjustments of the parts employed in making those modifications, as any interference with the parts will produce that obstacle to smoothness and equality in the scale which we commonly call a "break."

If the entire throat, which of course includes the tongue, is allowed to remain perfectly free and untrammelled; if no part is held in a fixed position, and if the lungs remain free to expand to the ingoing and outgoing of the breath, as they will if the diaphragm be neither held in a fixed position nor consciously worked, the registers will assert themselves naturally, and merge imperceptibly into one another with perfect ease.

The number of registers varies in different voices. The soprano and contralto voices of full compass have five registers, the tenor has three, and the bass and barytone have two.

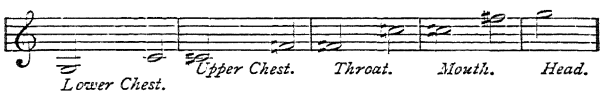
From a physiological standpoint these registers represent different adjustments of the vocal cords or ligaments, and also different positions of the larynx itself, which different positions cause a variation in the dimensions of the throat.

The larynx stands lowest for the lower chest register, and in this position the throat is long and wide; and as the larynx gradually ascends for each succeeding register, the throat becomes shorter and narrower, until it reaches the highest point, when the space in the throat is very small.

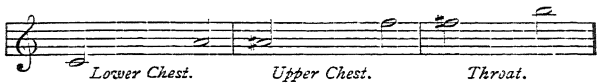
From the standpoint of the singer, however, the registers simply represent different qualities of sound and different points of reverberation in the body.

The following is a table of the different registers of the male and female voices, designating the various points of the body where the tone vibrates. The notes sung in these different registers vibrate as follows:

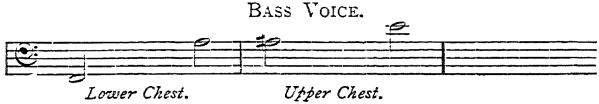
SOPRANO AND CONTRALTO VOICES.



TENOR VOICE.



BASS VOICE.



The registers are also called "lower thick," "upper thick," "lower thin," "upper thin," and "small."

It may be objected that if these different registers are inherent in the voice, and will therefore assert themselves naturally and merge imperceptibly into one another, what need is there to learn about them? The answer is, first, that without a conscious recognition of natural law, as manifested in the voice, or anything else, the tendency is almost invariably to deviate from it, or resist it in one way or another.

Secondly, that the excessive tension which has become almost second nature with nine people out of ten, prevents the natural law from prevailing, or even from making itself known.

Therefore, as a singer generally starts without a possible recognition of what is really inherent in the voice, it is necessary, first, to relax the excessive tension, and then learn the registers as a child learns the alphabet.

The singer should in the daily practice sing every note within his or her natural range, looking to the different parts of the body indicated in the table of registers as the points where the tone will seem to be struck; for such is the relation between cause and effect that the singer gets a decided impression that the tone is attacked in precisely the place where it reverberates.

Let me warn the student, however, against trying to direct the tone towards any part of the body; for although practically the tone cannot be

so directed, the futile attempt to do so is productive of bad results.

It must be remembered that this locating of the registers is not a conscious physical act, but only a mental recognition of the natural law which demands that the tone shall reverberate in these different parts of the body. The same passivity of body should be maintained in testing the registers that I have urged so persistently throughout this entire treatise.

Let me repeat once more, in other language, that the singer is simply to expect that the tone which it is his impulse to sing will be struck in the different parts of the body indicated, but he is not to make the slightest physical effort to strike it there.

If this testing and intelligent recognition of the different points of reverberation is faithfully pursued in the daily practice during a period of, say, a month or two, the singer will become so familiar with the sounds as nature intended them to be, that in singing roulades, songs, or dramatic music of any kind, he will never have to think of the registers or pay any attention to them, except occasionally to correct an unruly tone, where the word on which it is sung makes the proper adjustments fail to come as readily as desired, or where a fixed position of some of the parts has unconsciously asserted itself. In such a case it would be well to deliberately relax all superfluous tension, and test the register by singing the tone on some other

vowel or syllable better adapted to it, until the correct reverberation once more asserts itself and the ear recognizes it.

When the singer has once thoroughly mastered the registers, they will trouble him or her no more than the alphabet does in speaking or writing. In fact, the alphabet forms an excellent analogy to the registers in the relation they bear to singing, when they have been learned. The different tones of the different registers will prevail by association, and the entire regulating of the scale of registers will become automatic, like everything else that relates to the physical processes, on the sole condition, however, that the singer shall maintain no fixed position of any part, either of the throat or body, but shall remain free, easy, and passive to natural law.

Those who do not come to a recognition of the different qualities of sound which belong to the different registers must fail to discover what constitutes one of the greatest charms of the human voice, namely, the beautiful variety of tone-color, by means of which the singer achieves the widest range of emotional expression.

The voices of those who, because of a confirmed stiffness, superfluous tension, or fixity of position, have never acquired a free and natural use of the registers, remain colorless, inexpressive, and consequently uninteresting. The full and natural resonance of the voice must be lacking, as well as the proper character and color of the tone. Hardness

will take the place of resonance, harshness or shrillness, of brilliancy, and deadness and dulness of softness.

It is in the nature of every instrument to possess different qualities of sound. How distinct the character of sound produced on each of the four strings of the violin, the viola, and the violoncello! The same law is equally apparent in both wind and percussion instruments. Shall the voice, then, be the only instrument that is white and colorless, when it, above all others, can be the richest and most significant in its various expressions? Yet there are those who, failing through ignorance to reconcile the different registers, seek to eliminate them altogether, and endeavor to make their voices sound alike from top to bottom.

Such a proceeding will, however, quickly destroy all the natural beauty of tone, and it is therefore most decidedly to be avoided.

The registers must be felt and encouraged as something natural. The different colors of the tone must be cherished, and the one important thing to be remembered is, that the registers of the voice do not imply breaks, but blendings of tone—natural, and not acquired blendings—and that where all the parts are free and sufficiently relaxed, these blendings of tone will take place automatically.

CHAPTER VI

THE FIVE ESSENTIALS OF VOCAL TECHNIQUE

THE essentials of a perfect technique are:

1st. A perfect tone-attack.

2d. A perfect "legato," or sustaining and connecting of tones.

3d. The "messa di voce," or swelling and decreasing on a single note.

4th. The distinct pronunciation of the vowels.

5th. The perfect articulation of the consonants.

With these mastered, the singer will have conquered every radical difficulty that vocal technique embraces, and he will be able to surrender himself without hinderance to the expression of the emotions in lyrical and dramatic singing, but not till then.

I.—ON TONE-ATTACK

Everything that appertains both to the quality and the modulation of tone depends primarily on the way in which the tone is attacked; therefore the importance of acquiring a clear and musical tone-attack is hardly to be exaggerated. Attack the tone badly, and nothing can improve it afterwards. It must remain imperfect, and fail utterly to convey the feeling or intention of the singer.

Again, rhythmic accentuation is wholly dependent on it, as, no matter how fine a feeling for rhythm the singer may possess, if he has not acquired the power to strike the tone clearly and positively at the precise moment when he wants it, his feeling for rhythmic accentuation and his voice which expresses it must be at war with each other. If the pitch of the tone is not clearly defined at the start, if there is a hesitating, groping, or gliding effect, the musical phrase must be upset, and its rhythmic proportions seriously disturbed.

Bad phrasing and the dragging of time in singing are almost invariably due to a slovenly tone-attack.

From a mechanical point of view the perfect tone-attack is when the vocal cords meet in tone-production at the precise moment that the breath is liberated. If the meeting of the vocal cords in sound anticipates the liberation of the breath, the tone-attack is hard and explosive. If, on the other hand, the liberation of the breath anticipates the closing of the vocal cords, the result is that the tone sounds as if it began with "h."

These two effects are the only tests that the singer has of incorrect mechanism in tone-attack, inasmuch as there is no definite physical sensation involved. He must therefore depend implicitly on his ear for the recognition of the defective mechanism in the tone itself. It is therefore absolutely necessary that the ear of the singer be in-

itially trained to distinguish the one correct and perfect attack from the wrong ones, as otherwise his practice must go for naught.

The effect of correct tone-attack is bell-like clearness, spontaneity, absolute and instantaneous precision in pitch, and great elasticity and pliability.

As the singer possesses no direct control over the vocal cords, how shall he bring them together at the precise moment that he liberates the breath and thus attack the tone to perfection? How shall he prevent them from coming together a little too soon or a little too late? By the following practice: Inhale gently, hold the breath a second, then sound the tone gently but positively and without further attention to the breath. The giving up the breath to the sound should not be a conscious act, as separate from striking the tone, as the liberation of the breath is included in tone-impulse.

Remember always that holding the breath does not mean holding the *muscles* which *control* the breath. The frame of the body will remain passive as long as the singer wills to retain the breath, and therefore it does not need to be held in a fixed position.

The muscles controlling the breath will reverse themselves, and the expansion of the frame give place to contraction on the instant that the singer wills to sing. The singer, then, in breathing must be conscious only of the breath itself which he draws in, and in singing, only of the tone he sings.

There must be no thought of the tone during the act of breathing, no thought of the breath during the act of tone-production.

This distinctness of purpose, or alternation of thought, will produce a perfect physical action and reaction which will impress the singer with a delightful sense of rhythmic relation between breathing and singing.

By adhering closely to these simple directions, a perfect tone-attack must be the result.

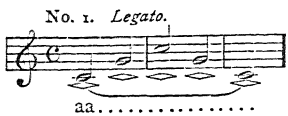
2.—THE "LEGATO," AS DISTINCT FROM THE "PORTAMENTO"

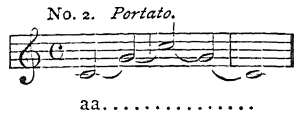
The term "legato," as applied to singing, is often confused with the "portamento," yet they are not by any means one and the same thing, and it is very desirable that singers should understand in what the difference consists.

"Legato" signifies "bound," and, applied to a succession of notes, it means that they are to be bound together, or connected one with the other.

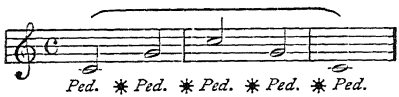
"Portamento" signifies the "carrying" of tone, and is in effect dragging the voice from one note to another, touching lightly, almost imperceptibly, on each intervening sound.

In legato singing, the intervening sounds in passing from one interval to another are not touched, but the musical sound of one note is sustained until the precise moment of pitching the next tone. In musical notation the difference between the two may be described thus—





The effect of No. 1 legato can almost be reproduced on the piano by a skilful use of the loud pedal, and by not lifting the finger from one note till the other is struck, thus—



while it is utterly impossible to give even an approximate idea of the portamento on a percussion instrument. The portamento effect can, however, be reproduced perfectly on the violin and other stringed instruments.

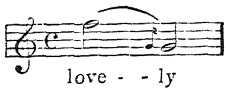
The portamento is so often ignorantly substituted for the legato, and with such unpleasing results to the auditor, that the complaints and severe criticism called forth by the abuse thereof have reacted on singers, who, in their wish to abandon the habit of constantly dragging the voice from tone to tone, have gone to the other extreme of constantly detaching the tones, and thus robbing their singing of smoothness, or that beautiful sustained character known as "cantabile." This error is, of course, due to not understanding that legato and sostenuto are practically one and the same thing, and that the portamento is something else; that while the constant use of

the portamento is tasteless and tiresome in the extreme, legato, or sustained singing, is always beautiful and most grateful to the ear. The simple legato, moreover, indicates the practised and skilled singer, as it demands a fine and flexible action of the stretching and slackening muscles of the larynx, which ordinary singers do not take the trouble to acquire. It is for this reason that mediocre vocalists instinctively take refuge in the portamento where the legato should be used, as the dragging sound of the voice in touching the intervening notes of the scale covers up, in a measure, their faulty mechanism, and seems to compensate, in a way, for their inability to properly sustain and bind the tones, while it partially satisfies their desire for a sympathetic and expressive quality in their singing, by indicating and suggesting their good intention for expression, even though they may not fulfil it.

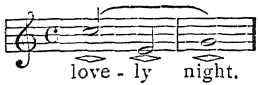
The portamento, when used at its best, may be defined as an emphasizing or exaggeration of the simple legato. Beautiful effects are to be produced by it when it is introduced with fine discrimination; but when the voice is carried in a slovenly way it suggests a smear, and when it is used indiscriminately it indicates both ignorance and bad taste.

The portamento can, strictly speaking, only be made on vowel sounds; consequently, when the singer wishes to carry the voice in a passage where the notes are divided by syllables, a short note has

to be interjected, or the second note has to be anticipated on the first vowel and retaken on the succeeding syllable, thus—



The following passage, however, can be sung legato without any anticipation of notes—



Here the legato effect depends wholly on sustaining one note till the next is pitched, for the natural interruption to the vocal sound which the consonant affords does not mar the effect where the singer articulates with spontaneity.

Viewed mechanically, the alteration in pitch in legato singing is brought about by an alternating action between the stretching and slackening muscles of the larynx, by which means the tension of the vocal cords is varied. In singing detached notes, the muscles which open and close the vocal cords assist the action of those other muscles which stretch and slacken the vocal cords in the alteration of pitch, while in legato singing the muscles governing the alteration of pitch get no such assistance. It will therefore easily be understood from a mechanical standpoint why true legato singing is more difficult to achieve than the declamatory style. It will also become apparent

that flexibility of voice, or the power to execute with security and exactness all rapid, smooth passages, depends entirely on the successful practice of the simple legato.

Let us now consider the use of the breath in legato singing. On pitching the first note of a legato passage, the breath should be liberated or given up to the voice exactly the same as in attacking either staccato or sustained notes, and no more attention should be paid to it from the moment of making the first tone-attack. There is no danger that the breath will force its way too violently towards the vocal cords, provided the muscles which control it are let alone. These will, if not interfered with, remain passive to the shrinkage of breath in measure as it is consumed by the tone-vibration, and the singer should therefore concern himself simply with pitching and sustaining the tones as they succeed one another, and with nothing else.

Whether we sing a slow or a quick scale, an arpeggio, a trill, or any other legato passage, bringing into play the muscles which govern the tension of the vocal cords or musical pitch, the breath is regulated exactly as in singing a long-sustained note; for, as we have already noted, the muscles governing the musical pitch are not the same as those which open and close the vocal cords in the alternate acts of breathing and singing, and therefore the breath is not affected by the variations in pitch.

To sum up, then, the acquisition of the true legato, as distinct from the portamento, is of the greatest importance to the singer who would be an artist, as smoothness and breadth of style are entirely dependent on it, as well as flexibility and beauty of execution.

3.—THE "MESSA DI VOCE" OR "CRESCENDO AND DIMINUENDO"

The "messa di voce" is a sustained note which, from the start, gradually increases in power till it reaches a climax, after which it gradually decreases in power till it fades out altogether.

It is on the power to increase or diminish a tone at will that the spontaneous expression of the emotions largely depends. The swelling and decreasing of tone may therefore be called, broadly speaking, the technique of emotional expression. When the emotion wells up from the soul, the voice must respond to it in a tone-wave, and as the emotion spends itself, so must the tone fade out.

This tone-wave or swell is literally emotion made audible. The more spontaneously, the more unconsciously, this tone-wave rises in the voice, the more ideally perfect will be the expression of the singer; and without this power to increase or diminish the voice with readiness or freedom, there can be no true expression at all.

A dead level of waveless tone cannot move anybody's feelings, because, in the first place, the tone

itself is not moved to life or action. It is just a dead tone and nothing more, and its deadness is felt by those who listen, and is by them apostrophized as inexpressive.

Singers often think they are making a "crescendo" when in fact they are doing nothing of the kind. This is when they press on some of the throat muscles in their ignorance of how a crescendo is made, and associate the physical pressure with an increase of volume in sound. They do not really hear an increase of sound, but they take it for granted that there must be one in response to the pressure, which pressure, in point of fact, simply hardens the tone, or renders it tremulous—sometimes both. If we would acquire the skill to swell or decrease the volume of tone at will, we must understand and bear in mind that it is the breath, and the breath alone, that is physically responsible for the increase or decrease of tone, and not muscular pressure, or procuring a larger space in the throat for the tone to expand in, by depressing the larynx.

When a larger or smaller quantity of breath is set free, a more or less full vibration of the vocal cords is the result; therefore, when the will is directed to swelling a tone, a larger amount of breath is unconsciously liberated to the fulfilment of its purpose. When a crescendo is desired, the tone must be struck lightly. But let the singer remember that to attack a tone lightly or gently does not imply attacking it hesitatingly or by degrees.

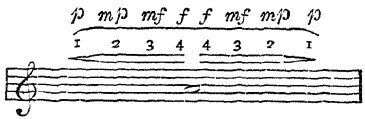
The soft attack necessary where a crescendo is to follow must be just as positive, clear, and bell-like in its gentleness as that of a short staccato note, the process of touch being identical in both cases.

The most important thing in swelling the voice is the freedom of the muscles controlling the breath. The singer should remain absolutely unconscious of their regulating function, and should only be concerned with pitching, swelling, and diminishing the tone itself, without regarding how it is done or what does it.

Is the tone-impulse for a soft sound, the muscles which regulate the outbreathing will give very gently and a small amount of breath will be liberated. As the singer wills a crescendo, a greater quantity of breath is given up to the vocal cords, varying in amount according to the desire for a full or a slight crescendo. When a "diminuendo" is desired, the eagerness of the breath is arrested, its forward pressure grows more and more gentle till the singer wills the sound to cease, when the vocal cords open and tone-vibration ceases.

This is the whole process of the messa di voce, and to the singer who has acquired this art of swelling and diminishing on a single note, the expression of every wave of emotion that the human soul can conceive becomes possible.

The messa di voce may be pictured thus—



The figures represent the different degrees of sound and their rhythmic relation to each other, for in the perfect vocal swell perfect rhythm is always found.*

4.—VOWELS

Their Relation to the Registers, and their Effect on the Vocal Scale

It is on the individuality of color that each separate vowel gives to the voice that variety in tone largely depends.

It is the vowel, we may say, that differentiates the integral tone of the registers. This variation in color, however, is not to be mistaken for variation in the integral quality of the tone. The five vowels sung on the same pitch should sound equally resonant, equally clear, and should have the effect of being equally forward. But while the quality of tone is the same, each vowel must be distinct from the other in character. That the intrinsic quality of the tone should remain the same on all the vowels must seem natural when we understand that the different vowel sounds depend on a variation in the shape of the resonator, and not on any change in the vibrating portion of the larynx or the initial sound itself. Where the correct instinct of the singer causes him to demand perfect equality of tone on all the five vowels sung on the same pitch, nature responds by making the

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* See Part III., Ch. IV., on "Rhythmical Breathing."

fine adjustments necessary to that equality. Were it not for this wonderful power of adjustment in our vocal instrument, every vowel sound would possess a quality foreign to the others, and the five vowels sounded on the same pitch would seem to proceed from five different parts of the body.

We shall easily understand this effect if we consider the vowels from a mechanical standpoint, as we shall at once recognize the close relation that exists between them and the five registers.

We have already stated in the chapter on Registers that the position of the larynx in the throat varies with each register, standing lowest for the lower chest register, and gradually ascending for each succeeding one. Also, that these various positions of the larynx alter the dimensions of the throat, which, when the larynx is in the position demanded by the lower chest register, is long and wide, growing shorter and narrower as the larynx ascends for the higher registers. This same variation in the dimensions of the throat, and consequently in the position of the larynx, is what actually produces the different vowel sounds, which, we must at once perceive, establishes a close relationship between them and the five registers.

On sounding *oo*, as in *boon*, the larynx stands low, and the throat above is spacious. On *ō*, as in *go*, the larynx is somewhat higher, and the space in the throat a little smaller.

On *aa*, as in *bath*, it is about in the middle of the throat.

On *ā*, as in *say*, it rises a little higher, and the throat is somewhat narrower.

On *ee*, as in *deep*, it is at its highest, and the space in the throat above is small.

The following table indicates the correspondence between the vowels and registers—

	Lower chest or Lower thick	Upper chest or Upper thick	Lower middle or Lower thin
corresponds to	oo	ō	aa̤

	Upper middle or Upper thin	Head voice or Small Register
corresponds to	.....ā	ee

This variation in the position of the larynx in the pronunciation of the vowels necessitates also a variation in the position of the tongue, as the larynx is attached to the tongue bone, so that the one cannot move without the other. This fact relates equally to the registers, of course.

The soft palate and its pendant, the uvula, also play an important part in varying the shape of the resonator, inasmuch as they rise higher and higher in correspondence with the larynx in ascending the scale, and also in the formation of the vowels, following each other in the order given above, namely, *oo*, *ō*, *aa*, *ā*, *ee*.

All of these different adjustments of the larynx, tongue, and soft palate, however, respond at once to the mental formula of the different vowels, on the sole condition that all the parts involved are

relaxed and passive. Otherwise, what a formidable matter the act of singing would be! What a terrible conflict there would constantly be, in singing with words, between the mechanical adjustment required for the vowel and those demanded by the tone! For instance, the vowel *oo*, sung on a head tone, or even an upper middle tone, would be hollow and weak, and would seem to bear no relationship to any tones sung on homogeneous vowels. Again, the vowel *ee*, sung on a chest tone, would rob the sound of all its characteristic fulness and richness. And how could it ever be possible for the singer to obtain the desired effect of equality by attempting to direct the will to any of these parts or processes? Even if we had direct control over each and all of these different parts, no human intelligence could possibly work quickly enough to determine the precise adjustment of each muscle and ligament required to make a perfect harmonious union between the vowel sound and the tone on which it is sung, when these conflict with one another, as they constantly and inevitably must do. It is simply unthinkable that any proper results can be attained, excepting by means of the singer's own definite perception of what his ear demands in sound, regardless of how nature goes to work to fulfil the desired result.

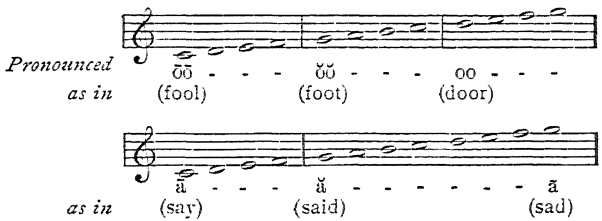
Thus the will of the singer should be directed to the sound alone, which sound he demands to hear, say on *oo* or on *ee*, either gently or vigorously, on one pitch or another; and it is on the singer's fine-

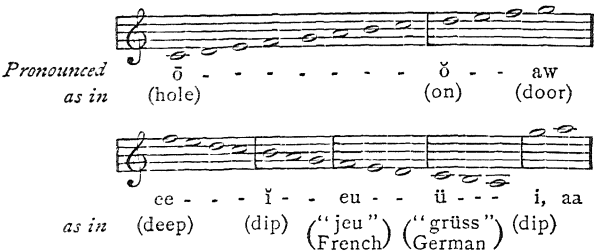
ness of perception and musical ear, or the degree of beauty and perfection in tone that he is capable of conceiving at the time, that must depend the niceness of adjustment in the complex machinery which nature has provided to carry out his purpose.

It is important that the singer should understand that a certain modification in the vowel itself is indispensable to the perfect production of sound in certain parts of the voice. For instance, the vowel *ee*, pronounced as in *deep*, is favorable to the upper middle tones; but when it occurs in the lower middle register, it should be modified to *ĭ*, pronounced as in *dip;* and on the chest or thick registers it should be still further modified to *ü*, pronounced as in the German word *grüss.*

Again, the vowel *oo*, pronounced as in *stoop*, is favorable to the thick registers; but in ascending the scale it becomes necessary to modify it to *o͝o*, pronounced as in *foot.*

The following examples will serve to make the matter clearer, and to show the exact relation of some of the vowel modifications to the vocal scale—





There are other slight modifications which I have not thought it necessary to specify. The necessity for most of these is generally felt by the singer, and the modifications themselves, for the most part, come about naturally, with the exception of those in the vowel *ee*, to which, as a rule, the attention of the singer requires to be drawn.

Let it be understood, however, that, although these modifications of the vowel in different parts of the scale must be in the intention of the singer, the effect of the vowel sound to the listener is as though no change had taken place. Thus *ü*, sung in the thick registers, sounds like *ee*, though, in order that it may do so without impairing the quality of the tone, the singer has to modify the vowel from *ee* to *ü*.

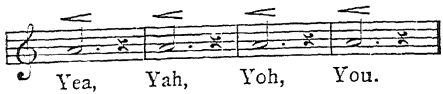
After what has been said about the effect of the different vowels on the shape of the resonator, and consequently on the position of the larynx in the throat, it will readily be understood that certain vowel sounds may be used with very good results

as correctives to defective tone-production. For example, where the singer has acquired a habit of holding the larynx low in the throat in a fixed position, thus producing what is commonly known as "throaty tone," to exercise the voice on the vowel *ee*, instead of *aa*, will break up the habit of holding down the larynx more effectually than anything else. It also will correct a hollow tone of voice where it exists.

I must warn the singer, however, to guard well against permitting the sound to go through the nose, the object of practising on *ee* being to compel the larynx to rise from the low and fixed position it has been accustomed to maintain on *aa*, to meet the demands of the vowel *ee;* while, if the singer permits the voice to go through the nose, as there is a strong inclination to do on the vowel *ee*, the larynx will not rise, and the remedy will prove worse than the disease. If the mouth remains well open in singing *ee*—almost in the same position as in singing *aa*, in fact—both the larynx and soft palate will rise to the occasion, and the sound produced on *ee* will be clear, resonant, and musical. It is therefore important that the singer should avoid the tendency to partially close the lips on *ee*, though a slight narrowing of the aperture between the upper and lower teeth is natural and proper.

After this practice of the vowel *ee*, sung with open mouth, has been persevered in until every tone within easy range of the voice, say, from C to F, sounds clear and resonant, the exercise should

be varied to *eea*, *eeaa*, *eeo*, *eeoo*, sung and pronounced thus—



This is a very effectual exercise in curing throaty or hollow tone, inasmuch as it induces the elevators and depressers of the larynx to act normally, where they have been permitted to remain fixed or inert. The whole object of the exercises will be defeated, however, unless the singer is careful to keep the mouth open on pronouncing the first vowel sound *ee*, as otherwise the tone will be nasal.

In this, as in all practice, it is indispensable that the lower jaw, the throat, the neck, the tongue, and all the surrounding parts remain normally relaxed.

The following is a table of the long and short vowels—

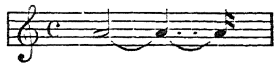
Long Vowels		Short Vowels
oo in fool	dark colors	ă in cat
ō " go		ĕ " set
aa " far	light colors	ĭ " sit
ā " may		ŏ " not
ee " see		ŭ " suck

The vowel *i*, pronounced long as in *pine*, and *u* as in *mute*, are sung like proper diphthongs.

A diphthong has been defined as arising from a glide between two vowels, one of which is short and the other long.

On *i* in *pine*, *oi* in *voice*, *ou* in *sound*, *ow* in *now*,

the first sound is long, and the second very short. In singing any of these, the voice must be sustained entirely on the first sound, and the second should only be heard as the tone ends. Thus—



pine, paa.....een
voice, vaw.....eece
sound, saa.....oond
now, naa.....oo
boy, baw.....ee

In *u* as in *mute*, *eu* in *feud*, *ew* in *dew*, *uo* in *quote*, *ui* in *languid*, *ua* in *assuage*, the voice is sustained on the second sound, and the first sound is uttered quickly, as though it were a part of the first consonant. Thus—

mute, mee...oo.....te
feud, fee....oo.....de
dew, dee...oo.....
quote, qoo... ō .....te
quite, qoo...aa.....eete

I have only one thing more to add, before leaving the subject of the vowels, and that is: the singer should always bear in mind that vowels are formed primarily in the throat, and that the variations in the shape of the mouth, which accompany their production, are secondary to the throat variations; therefore, to form the vowels consciously

in the mouth is to produce sounds that are devoid of a distinct and positive character, sounds that are colorless and artificial, and the more they are consciously mouthed, the more labored and indistinct they will be. They will also have the effect of being something extraneous applied to the tone, whereas each vowel should always be incorporated in the musical pitch itself.

This incorporation of the vowel on the tone can only be the result of a perfect conception of the musical pitch and vowel as a unit, and an unreserved surrender of the whole vocal mechanism to that conception.

5.—CONSONANTS

There is nothing that adds more positively to the charm of singing than a clear and distinct articulation. It is a most powerful agent in declamatory singing, and both valuable and necessary in all forms of dramatic expression.

All consonants form more or less of an obstruction or interruption to the vocal sound; but as the interruption is a natural one, and as distinctness of utterance depends on that interruption, the singer should not attempt to shirk it, or lessen the value of the consonant on the ground that the vocal sound will be improved thereby. On the contrary, the full value must be given to the articulate sound, and the necessary time for its completion must be allowed, or the result will be most unsatisfactory.

In spite of the fact that consonants form for a brief moment an obstruction to the vocal sound—inasmuch as the sound which passes freely through the mouth in singing vowels is intercepted, either wholly or in part, in consonants—they never really prove a hinderance to perfect tone-production where the singer understands the nature of the different consonants and their relation to vocal sound.

The singer who sacrifices clearness of sound to smoothness of vocalization labors under the great mistake of supposing that these two qualities cannot be harmonized. They not only can be harmonized, but the one can be made to help the other.

It is not in my purpose to explain how the different consonants are formed, as every normal person can find that out for himself, and because all those who are not handicapped by some strange peculiarity form the different consonants instinctively and without stopping even to think how it is done.

To such as may need directing in this respect, however, I recommend the study of Alexander J. Ellis's pronouncing primer, entitled "Speech in Song" (Novello, Ewer & Co., London and New York), in which admirable work the whole subject is treated exhaustively.

All that I propose to do is to cite and treat of the different classes of consonants, only with reference to their specific use in singing, and to point

out certain rules, the close observance of which will render a clear and distinct articulation both easy and natural.

The parts chiefly concerned in articulation are the tongue, the lips, and the teeth, and distinctness of articulation is the result of the flexibility and readiness with which the tongue and the lips perform what is required of them.

Dwelling on, or exaggerating the consonant does not add to clearness of utterance. Clearness of utterance depends on the exactness with which the consonants are formed and the glibness with which they are uttered. There are, however, some exceptional cases where a slight exaggeration, or dwelling on the initial consonant of a word, or occasionally also of the terminal, may be made effective in declamatory singing. We will consider the different classes of consonants.

Class I.—*f*, *s*, *z*, *sh*, *th*, *wh*.

These do not admit of vocal sound, but possess a sound of their own, which is independent of voice.

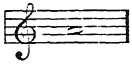
When one of these is at the beginning of a word, it must be made audible, as an independent sound, before voice is given.

When it occurs in the middle of a word, it must interrupt the voice with its independent sound.

When it ends a word, it must be sounded after the voice has ceased. Thus, the following words would be sung in this way:

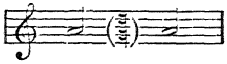
EXAMPLE

Words beginning and ending with consonants which have a sound of their own, which is independent of voice.



faith, f....ai...th
thrush, th..ru...sh
south, s....ou..th
vase, v....a....se
zest, z....e....st
whiz, wh..i.....z
sheaf, sh...ea...f

Words where the independent, voiceless sound occurs in the beginning and in the middle.



vesper, v....e....sp...er
therefore, th...ere. f.....ore
slashing, s.....la...sh...ing
faithful, f.....ai...thf..ul
shifting, sh...i.....ft...ing
whistling, wh..i.....st...ling
zephyr, z....e...ph...yr

If the singer, heedless of the fact that the voice must be held in abeyance till the above independent sounds are made audible, attempts to force out the voice prematurely, the mere attempt to do so, though necessarily unsuccessful, will cause a muscular effort and produce tension in parts of the body which will rob the vocal sound of beauty and deprive the singer of freedom.

Few people have any idea how much of the labored, strained, and ineffective singing that we are in the habit of hearing is due simply to ignorance or heedlessness of this important fact.

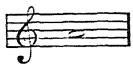
Class 2.—The following consonants, *b*, *p*, *d* (*k*, *q*, *c*), *t*, *g*, *j*, *ch*, are silent at the beginning of a word, only becoming audible when the vowel sound which follows the consonant is voiced. Therefore, when one of these begins a word, the

singer should silently form it before the tone is sung. When it occurs in the middle of a word, it simply interrupts the vocal sound for a brief moment, and again becomes audible when the next vowel is sounded. When it ends a word, its characteristic explosive sound must be made audible after the voice ceases, when it takes on the faint vowel sound *e*.

Let the singer bear in mind that the final explosive, including the faint vowel sound at the end, is voiceless.

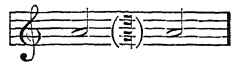
EXAMPLE

Words in which the consonant is silent at the beginning, and sounded (without voice) at the end.



dead,	d...ea...de
peep,	p...ee...pe
bade,	b....a....de
judge,	j.....u....dge
kite,	k....i.....te
quid,	q...ui...de
chap,	ch...a...pe
gulch,	g....u...lch
joke,	j.....o...ke

Words with the silent consonant in the middle (interrupting the voice).



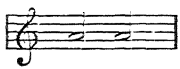
chirping,	ch..ir.....p...ing
gulping,	g...ul.....p....ing
judgment,	j....u..... dg..men...te
dragon,	d...ra.....g....on
keeper,	k...ee....p....er
joker,	j....o.... k....er
body,	b...o.....d....y
pardon,	p...ar....d....on
counter,	c...oun..t....er

Class 3.—The following consonants, *l*, *m*, *n*, *r*, *w*, *y*, *ng*, *tn*, *dn*, admit of vocal sound, inasmuch as the vocal sound is only partially intercepted by them. In singing the *r*, *w*, and *y*, the voice has free passage through the mouth, *w* and *y* being

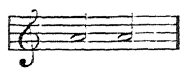
the same as *oo* and *ee*. In all the others, the sound is nasal. For this reason, they should not be dwelt on any longer than is absolutely necessary for distinctness of utterance.

Whether any of the above consonants occur at the beginning, the middle, or the end of a word, the voice never is wholly interrupted, although a certain change takes place in the quality of the tone on all those consonants that are nasal.

EXAMPLE



m, n, man...ner
w, l, wal....low
r, ng, roar...ing



y, l, yel...low
dn, gar...dner
tn, par...tner

I have only to add, in conclusion, that in order to attain that ease, spontaneity, and clearness of articulation which is so essential to an artist, the singer should always bear in mind that it is through a perfect mental appreciation of the nature of the consonant and its relation to the voice, and to the perfect instinct with regard to its exact formation, that the desired spontaneity of utterance is brought about, and not through laboring to pronounce, mouthing, or effort of any kind.

In singing, especially in declamatory music, the whole syllable should have the effect of being incorporated in the note and of characterizing the tone, the two being now one.

CHAPTER VII

HOW TO STUDY

THERE are but few singers to-day who have really mastered, and who carry out habitually in their singing, the few simple laws cited under the headings of "attack," the "legato" or "sostenuto," the "messa di voce" or swelling and diminishing of tone, and the pronunciation of vowels and consonants.

We hear singers with a good tone-attack, perhaps, but who have no idea of a true legato, and who fail utterly in sustaining and swelling the tone. Again, we hear those who use the legato most effectively, but who have a defective tone-attack. And, again, we hear those who, having a good attack, or a good legato, pronounce the vowels or the consonants so indistinctly as to make it a matter of speculation in what language they are singing.

This is because they have not been taught to regard the technique of singing as a combination of so many different processes, each of which must be mastered separately before a perfect technique can be acquired.

One teacher, perhaps, will lay great stress on

tone-attack; another, on breathing, unrelated to tone-attack; another, on sustaining and swelling the tone; another, on articulation; and so forth. Thus one good quality, we may say, is cultivated at the expense of another, and the sum of these related differentiations of process remains incomplete, so that no one singer ever embodies all the qualities that go to make up a perfect technique.

Now, all of these differentiated processes are so intimately related with one another that if each one is fully recognized and properly developed the action, reaction, and interaction of these perfected processes cause one to sustain the other, and the whole technical process of singing thus remains permanently cohesive. But if, on the other hand, only one or two of these processes are brought to perfection, there can be no proper interaction and, consequently, no permanence or cohesion.

It is this failure on the part of singers to master each and all of these necessary processes that brings about the untimely disintegration of the voice which it is our lot constantly to observe and to deplore.

We should therefore advise all singers who would establish something lasting in technique, to make a special study of each of these processes in its turn in a systematically ordered sequence.

I will give a few examples of each type of exercise, in its proper order.

To economize space, I shall only give each exercise in one key, leaving the singer to transpose

into other keys, according to the range of his or her voice.

I also recommend that the exercises be practised without accompaniment, in order that the ear may not be confused by any sound independent of the voice itself.

It will be sufficient to strike the key-note on the piano before singing each exercise.

It is better to stand than to sit while practising, because a standing position is the most favorable one to freedom of motion in the body; besides which, it lends itself more readily to the animated spirit or life which should pervade the utterance of every tone.

The body should be erect and well balanced, and the shoulders should be thrown back in order that the proper expansion of the chest may come about quite naturally and without the slightest strain or effort.

NO. 1.—EXERCISE FOR TONE-ATTACK

Open the mouth as wide as seems natural, without stretching. Let the tongue lie flat and passive at the bottom of the mouth (not *held* flat, but rather as though it had been poured liquid into the mouth and had jellied there). Preserve the strictest rhythm in the practice of these and of all exercises, singing the detached notes in triple time, allowing two beats for the tone and one for the breath. Let the inflection between each note be very gentle, and keep the body well relaxed.

1.

mf *p*

ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! aa.

2.

mf *p*

ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! aa.

3.

mf

ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! aa.

4.

mf

ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! aa.

NO. 2.—EXERCISES FOR THE LEGATO, OR SOSTENUTO

1.

mf

aa.....

2.

aa.....

3.

aa.....

4.

aa.....

.....

NO. 3.—EXERCISES FOR THE MESSA DI VOCE

1.

Adagio.

p cresc.

aa.... aa.... aa.... aa....

aa.... aa.... aa

2.

f dim.

aa.... aa.... aa.... aa....

aa..... aa..... aa..... aa

3.

aa aa aa aa aa aa aa aa aa aa aa aa aa

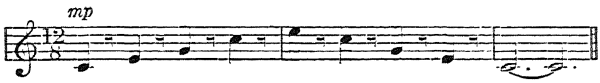
4.

p *pp*

aa..... aa.....

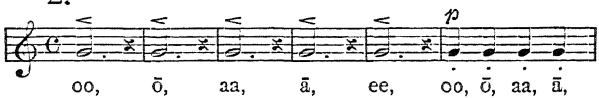
NO. 4.—EXERCISES ON THE VOWELS

1.



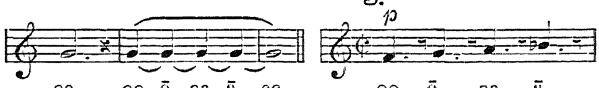
oo, ō aa, ā, ee, ā, aa, ō, oo....

2.

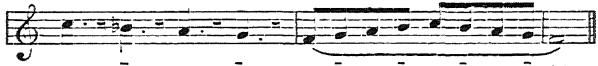


oo, ō, aa, ā, ee, oo, ō, aa, ā,

3.

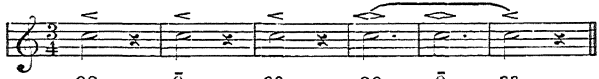


ee, oo - ō - aa - ā - ee. oo, ō, aa, ā,

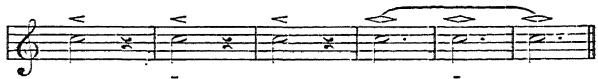


ee, ā, aa, ō, oo- ō - aa - ā - ee - ā - aa - ō - oo.

4.

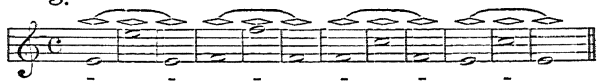


oo, ō, aa, oo - ō - aa.



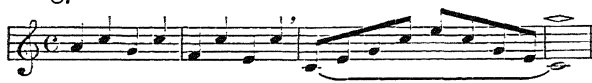
ee, ā, aa, ee, ā, aa.

5.

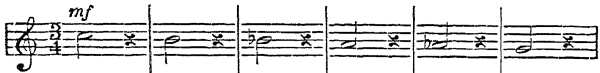


ō - aa - ō, aa - ā - aa, ō - aa - ō, aa - ā - aa.
oo - aa - oo, aa - ee - aa, oo - aa - oo, aa - ee - aa.

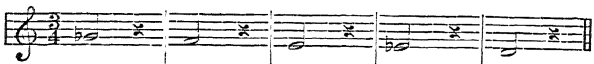
6.



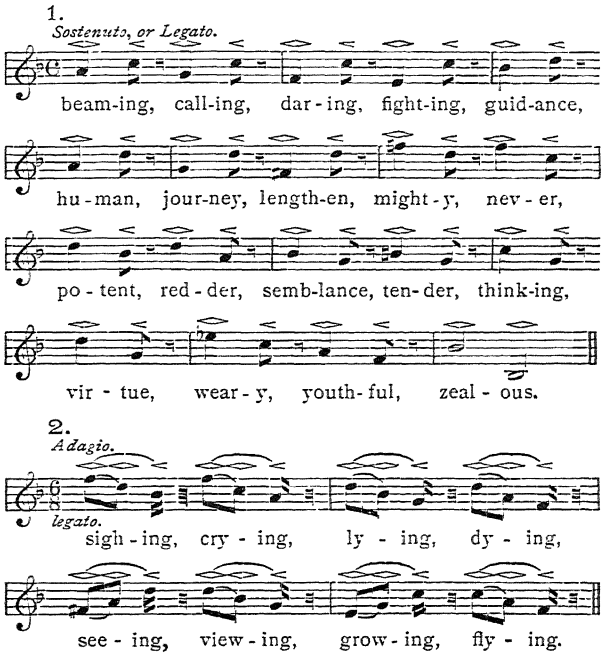
ee-aa- ā- aa - ō- aa-oo-aa, oo - ō - aa - ā - ee - ā - aa - ō-oo.



Boom	bone	ball	balm	bound	bay
Cool	coal	call	curl	calm	cat
Choose	chose	chore	charm	chat	chaste
Doom	dote	dawn	dirge	dart	day
Fool	foot	furl	fawn	far	faith
Ghoul	goad	Gaul	gird	guard	gay
Hook	hood	hole	hawk	hurl	half
Jew	Jo	jowl	jaw	jar	jade
Loom	lawn	lone	laugh	lamb	lame
Moon	mourn	moan	mouth	march	man
Noon	north	none	now	nap	name
Plume	put	pawn	pass	pat	pale
Qualm	quack	quite	quick	queen	queer
Room	roar	roam	raft	ran	ray
Stoop	storm	stone	staff	stand	same
Should	shore	shone	sharp	shall	shame
Tomb	tall	told	task	tame	tell
Through	throw	thou	thought	thane	thatch
Vault	vow	vote	voice	vine	vane
Womb	wool	ward	worth	wound	won
Wharf	what	while	whale	when	where
Youth	young	yore	your	yoke	yard
Zone	zest	zeal			



bell	beach	birch	bit	bier
came	keep	kept	kit	
cheap	cheer	chip		
dell	deep	dip		
fetch	feel	fell		
get	gleam	grip		
hat	hale	hell	heath	hill
jerk	jest	jeer		
let	lean	lip	light	
main	mean	mill	might	
nice	next	nymph	neat	new
pet	peach	peep	pit	pew
quail	quench	quit		
red	reach	rip	ripe	
said	seem	sip		
shed	sheen	ship		
teem	tip	time		
they	there	theme	theft	thrill
valve	veer	verse	vex	view
woe	waft	wane	weak	wit
wheel	which	whirl		
yea	yet	yield	year	



In the above series or sequence of exercises I do not profess, by any means, to have exhausted all the different combinations of sound; but I feel confident that any one who can sing such examples as I have given, clearly and distinctly, and with a beautiful musical quality of tone, will have no difficulty whatever in singing all those other combinations which are not included in these exercises.

If this system of practice be faithfully pursued,

the student will find that the perfecting of one process will materially help the others.

And now, in conclusion, let me once more remind the singer that in practising these and all other vocal exercises the ear is the only safe guide; for the ear is the conscience of the singer on the physical plane, and therefore a tone, be it on a simple vowel or a word, must never be accepted that the ear does not fully approve.

If the tone produced fails to give the singer a sense of complete satisfaction and enjoyment, it is a sure sign that it is not as good a tone as he has it in him to produce at that moment, and therefore the tone must be repeated again and again, until perfect satisfaction is felt.

Since the mechanism of tone has been so closely observed and so freely discussed, singers have developed a tendency to notice the different motions of the throat and body, instead of directing their whole attention to the sound itself, which is, after all, the only thing which really concerns them; for if the sound be beautiful, it is a sign that the vocal processes are correct; and if the sound be not satisfactory, watching or interfering with the vocal processes will certainly do no good. For it is only through the ear demanding something different from what it hears that the will is moved into new impulse and obtains from its organs what the ear demands, and that without any consciousness on the part of the singer of the specific changes that are taking place in the vo-

cal mechanism in order to produce the desired result.

If, on the other hand, the singer's attention is directed to any part of the vocal instrument, or even to its motor, the breath, his sense of sound, and his perception of either the beautiful or bad elements in sound, will grow fainter and fainter, and such feeling as he originally possessed for beauty of tone will grow duller and duller, till it finally fades out altogether.

As I have said before, our consciousness cannot be applied to two different things at once with profit to either; therefore, to notice the mechanism of singing or breathing during either act must result in our becoming purely mechanical, and consequently in losing our finer perceptions of the varied qualities and colors of tone, which can only exist and grow by virtue of our consciousness being vested in the ear.

Not to exercise our sense of hearing is to rob it gradually of the habit of acting at all; whereas, if we keep it in exercise, it will daily grow readier, finer, more acute, more analytical, and the ear will serve as an ever more and more effective medium of reaction on the will.

To conclude, let me exhort all those who sing never to practise exercises in a perfunctory manner. They should not be regarded as something tiresome and uninteresting, and to be disposed of as quickly as possible; but rather as types of beautiful, rhythmic, and harmoniously related actions,

by means of which we achieve the power to express our deepest and truest feelings.

Regarded in this light, what otherwise would be degraded to a mere mechanical drill will be exalted to a sublime aspiration to which we are giving voice, and which is to bring us to the full recognition of our latent possibilities.

Part III.

APPLICATION AND ELUCIDATION OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF SINGING

CHAPTER I

DRAMATIC EXPRESSION, AND ITS RELATION TO THE EMOTIONS

DRAMATIC expression is the representation of emotions which are not awakened by actual events or conditions, but which are the result of picturing mentally the emotional effects of events and conditions.

The more faithfully, the more truly, the different effects of different events and conditions on different natures are comprehended and reproduced by the artist, the finer and higher is his art; absolute truth to human nature, with all that is perceived of the divine therein, being in this, as in all expression, the main object to be attained.

The dramatic artist, then, as interpreter, should first be able to comprehend human nature in all its complex emotional possibilities.

By means of the intellect alone this is not possible. An artist who interprets human emotions must at least be capable of experiencing the emotions which he interprets (though he may not necessarily have ever actually experienced them in his own person), for there can be no true dramatic art in one whose real emotions cannot be stirred.

Such a one can, it is true, be trained by a teacher to reproduce many of the tones, inflections, and gestures to which the emotions themselves would give rise, on much the same principle that a deaf-mute is taught to speak; but as most of us have both felt and recognized the hollowness and artificiality of such representations, it is needless to dwell on that kind of so-called dramatic art.

Dramatic art, however, may be rendered most true and effective in expression, even by one whose perceptions are not fine enough to be an original interpreter of human emotions, provided his own emotions can be easily roused, as in such a case another intelligence may co-operate with him as interpreter. In other words, a teacher can point out to the unfledged intelligence the different relations of cause and effect in emotional representation, and if the emotional possibilities exist in the pupil, they can be awakened and properly directed, with results as good as in the case of an artist who interprets as well as represents.

Great intellectual or analytical power is not, therefore, an absolute necessity to the effective dramatic artist; he must possess, however, an emotional nature, power of expression, and last, not least, imaginative power, the imagination being a most important factor in dramatic art.

The question now arises, Are the emotions which are represented by the artist real, living emotions or not? Are they simply the effect of the mind or imagination acting on the body, or are they

the effect of the mind reacting first on the emotions themselves? We say that the emotions are real for the time being, and that they are stirred to expression by a reflex action of the mind. In order to demonstrate this, let us try to define how real emotion is awakened in us according to nature.

In every case, emotion must be initially awakened by some agency independent of emotion itself, such as impressions received from events, or by thoughts and images; though as soon as emotion is roused, it becomes at once the essential motive power of expression.

As an illustration of emotions aroused by impressions received from events, you see an outrage committed; a cruel blow is struck, a helpless and innocent person is injured, and at once indignation, anger, or pity is awakened within you, which emotion is at once expressed in your face, attitude, tone of voice, or in some involuntary act. Or, you are yourself the object of an outrage or insult. The same emotion will be aroused, and the same expressions in kind will result, though varying in degree.

Again, you are to part from some one very dear to you—a mother, a father, a husband, or an only child. At the hour of parting your voice is choked with sobs and the tears stream from your eyes. Is it the act of parting in itself which produces this effect? Certainly not. Your emotion is the result of the thoughts which the act of parting

calls up in your mind by association. You think of the long absence of which the parting is the forerunner, of the lonely hours of yearning for the dear presence, of the dangers and perils that may attend the absent one, that perhaps it may not be granted you ever to look on that dear face again. It is such thoughts, such imaginings as these that arouse the emotions, that express themselves in tears and sobs, and not the mere act of parting, which in itself, and independently of the imagination, would produce no emotional effect whatever.

Now try to recall how it was with you when you read some pathetic and touching scene in a book—like, for example, the death of little Eva, in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," or of little Nell, in the "Old Curiosity Shop," or the death-bed scene of little Dombey, or of Colonel Newcome. Did not your eyes fill with tears, did you not feel a choking sensation in your throat? Were not your emotions aroused, and were those emotions not real? Yet the thing which aroused the emotions was not real. Nothing had occurred to grieve you, and yet your emotions were stirred in the same way that they would have been had the grief been your own; though only for the moment, it is true, for on closing the book and thinking of something else your tears ceased and your habitual serenity returned.

It is, then, an actual fact that our real emotions will respond immediately to thought; not permanently, but temporarily and sufficiently to serve

as motive power for expression. To think of something sad is to be sad as long as the thought lasts, and that sadness expresses itself directly in feature, voice, and pose. To think of something joyful, is to be joyful as long as the thought is maintained; so we can think ourselves into any emotional condition we choose. Moreover, that emotional condition, though ephemeral, is nevertheless real, not feigned, and as motive power to expression, it is all-sufficient; for emotion, once awakened, seeks expression, and to that end compels the will to act on its organs of expression. Thus, thought is the power which by reflex action awakens and controls the emotions in dramatic art. Through the power of thought, or imagination, we can awaken and produce any emotion of which the human soul is capable, and the emotion thus produced will be genuine and vital; whereas the emotion represented by the mind acting directly on the body, without first reacting on the emotions themselves, will be dead and artificial.

We all know that to assume an expression of any kind that has no real feeling back of it, or, in other words, to let the mind act independently of the emotions, and regulate that expression consciously in the body, is to produce a sickening effect of hollowness and insincerity. Our friend will surely feel the false ring in our greeting, if we only try to express cordiality in our tone, gesture, and smile, instead of *being* cordial. If we wish to make our friend feel our cordiality, we must *think*

ourselves into the mood of cordiality, if we are not already naturally in that mood, and we must let the mood express itself unconsciously in voice, facial expression, and general deportment.

We are called upon constantly in our daily life, by the laws of courtesy, to avail ourselves of dramatic expression, as we cannot always be sure of being naturally in the frame of mind that true politeness or perfect kindliness would demand in our bearing towards others. If we are to act, then let us act well, let our expression be genuine, at least while it lasts, that our good intention may not defeat itself.

I think the common belief that in dramatic expression the emotion is counterfeit, or the product of the mind's independent action on the body, must be due to the idea that the emotions could not change or cease so rapidly were they real. However, it is an undeniable fact that the connection between thought and emotion is so close and so perfect that the one can change as quickly as the other. You may be weeping, and a droll remark will produce a smile, perhaps even a laugh, before the tears have ceased to flow. This could only happen, however, provided the cause of the tears was not a real and deep sorrow, as in such a case the thoughts would be too much absorbed in the sorrow to be drawn away immediately. And herein lies the sole difference between emotion which has a natural cause and that which is the result of mental selection. The latter is short-

lived, it ceases with expression, and it cannot be recognized till it is already expressed. While it moves you to action or expression, you can only be reacted upon or impressed by it after it has ceased to be. Whereas, emotion that has a natural cause is more or less lasting, by virtue of a constant action and reaction between thought and emotion which keeps it alive until the current or rhythm is broken by some independent agency.

My plea is simply for genuineness always, in art as in life; for *being* the thing you fain would be, and not feigning the thing you would appear to be. I also urge that dramatic art—in which I include both acting and dramatic singing—is the one perfect outlet for the buried wealth of the human emotions.

In our every-day lives of limited eventfulness comparatively few of our strong emotions are brought into play; and many of us would go through life with no knowledge of our own capacity for feeling, with no suspicion of the depths of tenderness, pity, and love that can be stirred within us, were it not for the glorious and soul-satisfying expression of dramatic singing or acting.

Let us ask ourselves in what consists the strange and peculiar attraction that all true dramatic artists have for us. How does it happen that they so fascinate and enthrall us, that they sing and act themselves into our hearts, that they sit enthroned in our imaginations, and inspire us to all

kinds of noble thoughts and even to noble deeds? Is it not that they, above all others, reveal to us the wonderful wealth of beauty that lies dormant in our own souls for lack of opportunity for expression? If we greedily hang on their tones of passion and pain, of love and joy, and worshipfully surround them with a halo of light in our imaginations, is it not because that part of themselves which they reveal to us co-vibrates with that part of us which has either been repressed by the conventionalities of life, or has never been awakened in our commonplace, frivolous, or uninspiring surroundings?

It is, then, the unconscious expression of his true self that the artist sings when he is at one with the highest purpose of his art, and his art thus becomes his medium for revealing himself to himself, as well as to others.

This being the case, singing that is not dramatic cannot wholly fulfil its highest purpose, that of being the outlet of the soul's emotions. And this conclusion points to the fact that when the mere mechanism of tone-production has been mastered, and also the technique of singing, the only thing that concerns the singer is dramatic expression; in other words, how to adapt the real emotions to the poetical and musical form in which they are to be clothed. We will consider this now from a practical standpoint and in its application to singing, though what I am saying will apply essentially also to acting, declamation, recitation, and

oratory, the modifications demanded by the different forms of expression being very slight.

The first mental question that the singer should put to himself is, *Why* do I sing? And if the answer from his inner consciousness should not be, "Because I love to sing—because I want to sing," he should not sing at all, as the desire to sing is the elemental impulse which lies back of even the emotion selected by the mind, which we may call the formulated power of expression. If the fundamental desire to sing does not exist there can be no real soul-impulse of expression, and it necessarily follows that the whole process and effect of dramatic singing under such conditions would be perfunctory and mechanical at best. If, on the other hand, the inner consciousness should answer, "Because I want to sing," the next question we should ask ourselves is, "*What* shall I sing?" The answer is, "Something of *myself*, some part of *me*, something that I really *feel*, that I really *am*."

The next question is, "What form of expression shall this something of myself take? Shall it be gladness, love, ecstasy, gratitude, tenderness, sorrow, anger, indignation, contempt, pity, or what? This choice must depend on what the music and text of the song or recitative I am to sing shall reveal to me of the poet's mood. In other words, it is the poet's emotion, as I interpret it, which shall determine what my emotion is to be, or rather, what form my emotion shall take in its expression. And that form shall keep varying accord-

ing to the demand of the poet's formula. Thus I shall always express the emotion that wells up in my own heart, although I hang it on the poet's or composer's peg.

The question now arises, If my mind is occupied with imagining the emotion which the poet's mood indicates, what part of me shall control the formula itself? For I have already stated, in Chapter V., on "Spontaneity through Concentration of Energy," that our consciousness must be centred in the motive power or the emotion which lies back of expression. What will prevent me from singing "Ye banks and braes" instead of "The last rose of summer," the mood with which my mind is occupied being identical in both songs?

This question cannot be answered exhaustively in theory until it shall have become possible to make an anatomical study of the mental as well as the physical processes; nor would it assist the artist in expression were it so answered, any more than the anatomical definition of the physical processes can do. But such an answer to the question as may be given will, I think, cover every practical purpose; namely, when the singer has mastered the text and music of the formula, which of course is necessary before he can surrender his consciousness of the whole process of singing to the motive power of emotion, all that relates to the words and music becomes automatic, inasmuch as it is practically unconscious; for it is certain that whatever part the mind may take in communicating the for-

mula of text and music to its proper centre, the process is too rapid to be a conscious one. And it is also certain that where there is mental consciousness of the formula, the true emotional life or expressive quality in the voice at once disappears, and all true spontaneity of expression is banished. We can therefore only conclude that the formula of text and music is communicated by an unconscious mental process, or mental automatism, which automatism can be started through the agency of the eye, the ear, or the memory, working also automatically, by association, and that in this way the whole of the consciousness can be centred in the chosen emotion.

This unconscious adaptation of the poet's and composer's formula to the individual emotions is what makes absolute spontaneity of expression in dramatic art possible. For in this way the text and music become so closely related to the emotions themselves that they seem to be their only natural form of expression. In other words, the formula seems to be inseparable from the emotion; the one demands the other. In effect, it is as though the singer extemporized, and in so doing, naturally and unconsciously expressed himself in that particular form.

This merging of the form into the soul, or essential motive power of crude expression itself, is the perfection or final triumph of dramatic art, than which there can be nothing greater, nothing higher.

CHAPTER II

THE SCALE OF THE EMOTIONS

I HAVE said before that the voice should always convey some emotion of the singer to the auditor; that, in fact, a tone should never be uttered save for the purpose of expressing something that is really felt. This expression of true emotion is a simple process, and by no means difficult to carry out, because it is a natural one, as the voice lends itself inherently to the expression of every conceivable emotion, by supplying the proper tone-color for the whole scale of emotions, from the most sombre to the most light and sparkling.

If we divide the different emotions into groups, we shall find their analogies in the different registers of the voice, as each register naturally represents a distinct group of emotions, just as it represents a group of notes of the scale, where the singer pours out the voice freely and without restraint, so that the natural character of the different qualities of tone represented by the registers can assert itself.

Certain registers supply a more varied tone-color than others, and in consequence lend themselves to the expression of a greater variety of emotions,

as well as to finer modifications of the same. The upper chest register and the lower and upper middle registers are the most broadly expressive, while the lower chest and the head registers are less rich in variety of tone-color. For instance, the lower chest register lends itself only to solemn, gloomy, lugubrious expression; while the upper chest supplies the color for sorrow, pathos, anger, contempt, deprecation, pity, etc. The lower middle register, or throat vibrations, express love, serene happiness, pleasure, yearning passion, enthusiasm, admiration, hope, faith, etc. The upper middle register, or mouth vibrations, express joy, playfulness, tenderness, purity, and innocence, also vague and mysterious feelings. The head register lends itself to bright, sparkling, brilliant, gay expression, devoid of passion of any sort.

Nor is the voice the only instrument that enjoys the privilege of supplying the actual tone-color for the perfect expression of different groups of emotion. Each of the four strings of the violin, viola, and cello holds within itself the same inherent relative color. Wind instruments also lend themselves to the expression of different classes of emotion in their different parts. Berlioz says, in his treatise on modern orchestration, "Candor, artless grace, soft joy, or the grief of a fragile being suits the hautboy's accents"; and again he says, later on, "Beethoven has demanded more from the joyous accents of the hautboys, while he has no less felicitously succeeded in assigning them sad or forlorn passages."

I will not stop to cite the different instruments, and the emotions to which their various tone-color lends itself; it is enough to note the fact that all intelligent composers invariably use the deep registers of instruments and deep-toned instruments predominantly for the scale of sombre expressions, while the middle and higher registers and higher-pitched instruments are called into service by them for the scale of bright expressions. It is also a noteworthy fact that all composers of vocal music who have a true feeling for either lyrical or dramatic expression have instinctively had recourse to the lower registers of the voice for the sombre expressions, and to the upper registers for those of a brighter, happier, more tender, and more playful nature. And the finer the dramatic instinct of the composer the more completely will the scheme of tone-color, as set forth above, be carried out. either consciously or unconsciously, in his music, and consequently the more easy and natural will it be for the singer to co-operate with him in the true and eloquent expression of the emotions. This fact is so obvious to the close observer that it is needless to dwell on illustrations, my chief object being simply to call the attention of such as may not have recognized it to this existing scale of tone-color, which is inherent in the human voice and in all other musical instruments, and which is so essential a law that the true composer who is simply endowed with true musical feeling obeys it intuitively, while the full-fledged, intelli-

gent musician consciously obeys it, and seeks to demonstrate its value as a law to the fullest extent in his compositions.

It should therefore be an important part of the singer's education to recognize in his own voice the different and individual characters of tone, and to allow them to assert themselves with absolute freedom and distinctness in exercising the voice. Also to keep these different characters of tone distinct from one another, until they are thoroughly felt and recognized, and until they assert themselves naturally, unreservedly, and unconsciously.

Perfect strictness with regard to fitting the emotion, or one of the group of emotions, which belongs to the register to its own position in the voice can only be observed in exercises where the formula can be suited to the natural expression of the voice; but I urgently recommend a faithful adherence to this natural law in exercising the voice, as in this way only can the true character of tone-color which belongs to each register be preserved in all its integrity, and because all variations, transpositions, and blendings of tone-color which musical compositions may demand take place so naturally, so easily, so spontaneously, and so unconsciously, where they are required, that they need no preparation, no practice.

So distinctly do the different registers express the different groups of emotions, as cited above, and so direct an influence does the specific emotion have on the voice mechanism, that when a

certain tone, passage, or phrase in a song requires the singer to call up an emotion which does not belong to the register in which he is singing, it results in the tone which is sung being of mixed quality. The variety of tone-color thus brought about unconsciously by the manifold modifications in the voice mechanism is simply wonderful.

It may be argued that, as composers cannot always strictly observe and carry out this law of relationship between the emotions and the tone-color of the different registers, and as, therefore, the singer frequently has to avail himself of mixed voice, it follows that, in exercising his voice, he should make use of the mixed qualities at least as often as the pure registral tones. But this is practically not the case. It is far better, in daily practice, to preserve the natural tone-color of the register, and consequently to call up the emotion or emotions which have their affinity with it, on the same principle that the painter keeps the primary colors out of which he mixes and modifies his tints distinct from one another on his palette. As the colors on the painter's palette would soon become unrecognizable did he allow them to run into one another; and as, in consequence, he would soon be unable to produce any definite effects with such confused material; so also the singer should never lose the clear and integral expression of his emotions, clothed in their proper relative tone-color; which tone-color corresponds to the primary colors on the painter's palette, from which he blends and

composes all his varieties of tint and tone, the chief difference being, that the painter blends his colors consciously while the singer does not.

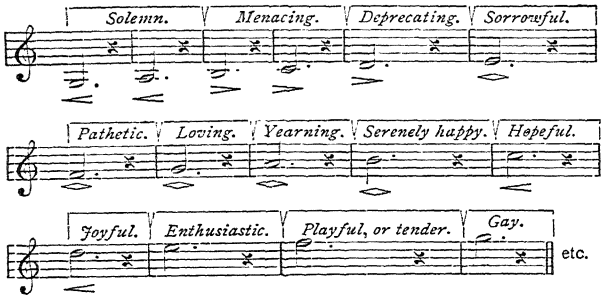
The emotion which the singer calls up is absolute ruler over the whole process of tone-painting. It blends the colors, it lays them on, it stirs the whole physical machinery into action, and the emotion is projected in sound, while the singer has no consciousness of the process, but only of his purpose.

It is for the singer, therefore, to acquire the habit of always fitting a well-chosen emotion to every note or group of notes in exercising the voice. This can be done in slow exercises with the greatest ease, and it renders the practice of sustained and slow detached notes, arpeggios, and scales so interesting and so inspiring, that the habit of perfunctoriness in practising exercises, where it exists, must quickly disappear, and an intense delight and enjoyment in exercising the voice take its place. Moreover, by pursuing this course of always fitting a suitable emotion to the tone, the singer gradually becomes aware of unsuspected and most interesting analogies between the different vowel sounds and the tone-color of the various registers, and consequently of the emotions themselves.

These recognitions crowd in on the mind, rousing it to an ever fuller perception and realization of the great and wonderful unity of things.

I will give a few examples of the way in which

the above law may be applied in the daily exercises of tone-production.



The above emotions or moods are, of course, not the only ones adapted to the notes over which they are indicated; they can be varied by the singer at will. The example given above is meant to be nothing more than suggestive. A perfect sequence of exercises might easily be devised for the purpose of developing a complete alphabet of dramatic expression out of the natural tones of the voice, but it is not within the scope of this work for me to undertake it here and now. Besides, I am persuaded that any intelligent singer who grasps and approves the idea of formulating some mood or emotion for every note or group of notes, in exercising the voice, can easily, from what I have already suggested, work it out and apply it for himself. I will, therefore, only add, that all roulades, quick arpeggios, scales, trills, etc., should properly be sung in a joyous and playful mood, though there are exceptions to the rule, of

course. The tones of the lower registers, when they occur, will in this case be somewhat modified from the pure registral sound, which fact, after what I have said, must be obvious.

The bass voice, which has only two registers, the lower and upper chest, is theoretically less capable of expressing a great variety of emotions than the tenor, contralto, or soprano. But nature is ever ready with its laws of compensation and adaptation, and when the bass voice is properly stirred into action by the true emotions, great and beautiful contrasts and shadings of tone are unconsciously brought about by means of wonderful and subtle adaptations of the vocal mechanism to the desired expression. In practising exercises in tone-production, however, the bass should confine himself to the expression of sentiments that are solemn, severe, martial, heroic, menacing, noble, dignified, sorrowful, pathetic, and imploring, etc.; for if he makes a common practice of calling up bright, tender, and joyous emotions, it gradually results in a disintegration of the full, manly tones of his upper register, which tones become either metallic and hard or hollow and lifeless. Let him therefore keep contentedly to his two registers, and develop these fully and freely in their natural beauty and power, and let him trust to natural law, at the moment of utterance, for the expression of such emotions as belong inherently to the other vocal registers than those which he possesses.

The tenor has at his command the necessary

tone-color for the solemn, severe, martial, heroic, menacing, noble, dignified, generous, sorrowful, imploring, and pathetic moods or feelings; and, in addition, he has the register which corresponds to the lower middle, or throat-vibrating, register of the soprano and contralto, which gives him the natural tone-color for the serenely happy, loving, hopeful, yearning, and glad feelings. Let him likewise content himself with this generous range of expression, and not seek to encroach on the playful or femininely tender sentiments which belong to the upper middle, or mouth-vibrating, register of the soprano or contralto, unless, perchance, he, like Rubini, is endowed with a compass which ranges beyond the high C.

In conclusion, then, I repeat, that the emotion which the singer calls up regulates indirectly the entire vocal mechanism, inasmuch as it stirs the will into action and thus compels the plastic vocal mechanism to furnish the proper tone-coloring for its own perfect expression; that the primary tone-colors which are inherent in the different registers of the voice blend and transpose themselves naturally to suit the ever-varying emotions brought into play by the dramatic and lyrical composition; and that there is nothing conscious in the whole process beyond the mere selecting of the emotion itself.

CHAPTER III

ACTION IN INACTION, OR THE TRUE RELATION OF PASSIVITY TO ACTION

In the practical application of the laws set forth in this treatise, I have found that one of the hardest achievements is to make the singer perceive the difference between the consciously directed action or adjustment of the parts used in singing and the unconscious or involuntary actions which Nature regulates so perfectly when left to herself —in other words, when the will, instead of acting directly on the parts, acts on them by indirection, through natural law, the will being directed to the purpose, and not to the process.

If you say, "Relax the body, and let it remain passive to natural law," it does not seem to convey the full meaning to the average mind, but will only be significant to the exceptionally thoughtful student, who has already become aware of some of the wonders of his own psychology.

There are many, however, who, although they have given no thought to the subject, and although they do not know in what their great stumbling-block consists, yet have stumbled and are constantly stumbling against their own psychology,

to their discouragement and despair. To these I will attempt some further explanation of this most illusive law.

We all know that in our physical organism there are certain active processes which are both involuntary and unconscious, such as the circulation of the blood, the process of digestion, the meeting of the vocal cords in speaking or singing, and so forth.

Also, that there are other involuntary processes which we cannot regulate, but of which we can become conscious if we choose, such as the beating of the heart and pulses, the rise of the soft palate, the sucking up of the uvula, and so forth.

Again, there is a third class of natural processes which act without direction, if permitted to do so, but which can also be regulated by the individual, such as the various movements of the tongue and larynx in speaking and singing, the various movements of the lips, tongue, and teeth in articulating, the rise of the soft palate in exhaling, the action of the breathing muscles in expansion and contraction, and so forth.

Now, the fact that the singer may become conscious of these latter processes, and also attempt to regulate them, is one of his greatest dangers; for to become conscious of them, or attempt to regulate them, is a most serious hinderance to a perfect tone-production.

Yet, if you tell the singer that the body should be passive, that no conscious adjusting or regulating of either the tongue or any part of the throat,

mouth, or trunk of the body should be permitted, it nearly always results in his assuming a fixed position, and, in so doing, hindering some of the natural and unconscious adjustments necessary in singing from taking place. The effect of such misinterpretation is quite as bad as that brought about by seeking to direct the parts consciously.

It should be remembered that passivity means something more than the opposite of activity. True passivity consists in equal readiness for either action or inaction, but not taking the initiative in either; in being acted upon rather than acting.

We are obliged to trust to nature for some of the processes of singing. Take, for example, that initial and most important act, the meeting of the vocal cords in the production of sound. This meeting of the vocal cords takes place by indirection. In other words, the singer does not and cannot make the vocal cords meet by an act of will directed to the vocal cords themselves; but through the mental affirmation, "I want to sing," the vocal cords meet naturally and unconsciously, and sound is the result.

We should take this for our type. We have here the vocal cords waiting passively for orders, but ready to spring into action in the twinkling of an eye at the signal; flexible, nimble, not fixed or stiff, yet still and motionless, until the signal is given to meet in phonation.

This is what passivity really means. It does

not mean dulness, inertia, or reluctance; it is not a negation of action; but it signifies readiness without eagerness, following, not leading.

Who wishes to attain his highest possibilities in singing must first achieve this perfect passivity of the parts, for they will work in perfect harmonious relation with each other only when the whole regulation thereof is left to natural law.

Let us consider a pianoforte as an example of an instrument, as a whole, in a state of passivity. There it stands, with all the latent capacity for musical sound within it; the hammers and dampers ready to act, the strings ready to be acted upon. Yet it would stand there till doomsday, and never a sound would it make. At the slightest touch of the fingers, however, it springs at once into harmonious and rhythmic action—the perfect embodiment of spontaneity. It is motionless, but at the same time ready to move; it is still and silent, but at the same time ready to give out musical sounds; it waits for the fingers that shall play upon it.

Our instrument, or body, should in this be like the piano. Even as the piano is under the law of its own mechanism should our vocal instrument be under the law of its own nature.

This vocal organ of ours is far more wonderfully constructed than a piano or any other instrument, and far more perfect in every way. And, moreover, instead of being played upon by clumsy fingers from without, it is played upon from within

by a power so nearly related to it that the player and the instrument seem to be one and the same.

But this fact of seeming identity between the instrument and its soul, which is the supreme glory of the human voice, is at the same time precisely what causes all the confusion. The singer confounds the will which plays on the instrument with the instrument itself; a fatal entanglement between the physical and the spiritual forces is the result; it is as a house divided against itself.

It is a notable fact that if you say to anybody, "Use your will," he immediately stiffens and straightens himself up, as if he thought the will were a muscle, which goes to show how difficult it is for us to appreciate the difference between our material and spiritual forces.

A good way to educate ourselves to the perception of this difference is to throw ourselves on the floor and give ourselves up to gravity, relaxing all unnecessary tension in every part of the body, and while in this prone condition sing a passionate phrase, or a phrase charged with strong emotion of any kind, either joyousness, enthusiasm, love, indignation—anything that is positive of its kind. Such practice will greatly aid in familiarizing us with that greatest of mysteries in our own organism, an active will and a passive body.

Whoever would attain to his highest expression in singing must first achieve perfect passivity of the body, as the parts used in singing will respond instantaneously to the will, and will work in per-

fect harmonious relation with each other only when the whole regulation thereof is left to natural law.

The lips, the jaw, the tongue, the soft palate, the uvula, the lungs, and the diaphragm must all be ready to spring into action in their manifold and diverse ways at the singing signal; but till then they must remain still and relaxed, and never should the will act directly on any of those parts, otherwise utter confusion must be the result.

To the singer who, by dint of intelligent practice, has already established in his body the habit of remaining passive to his active will, the production of a tone will seem like the impulsive utterance of a desire or command, which utterance is not his own conscious physical act. The tone will seem to be struck suddenly and positively for him, in response to his desire for expression.

The reason of this is apparent, even from a physiological standpoint. It is because the actual tone-attack or stroke of the glottis is performed by involuntary muscles, as I have already explained; to wit, the will is not directed to the vocal cords themselves nor to the process of giving up the breath to tone-production, but only to the ultimate purpose or effect, which is the sound itself. It is, then, the desire for expression in vocal sound which, as motive power, stands back of the mental and physical organisms, each of which either acts or is acted upon according to necessity; and the will which acts, either directly or indirectly, on

these organisms is the first manifestation of its parent, desire.

It is, then, the desire for a tone as expression which stirs the will to action; and the will, or supreme ruler of the executive organisms, mind and body, gives the command, which is actually fulfilled by them respectively.

Thus, that part of us which is conscious must be in an attitude of waiting for the fulfilment of the command given; and this attitude of waiting for the fulfilment is what is meant by passivity, or what, until the meaning is fully grasped, must seem like a contradiction in terms—action in inaction.

CHAPTER IV

RHYTHMICAL BREATHING, AND ITS RELATION TO SINGING

PERFECT rhythm is perfect action and reaction. It is to motion what harmony is to sound, what symmetry or proportion is to form.

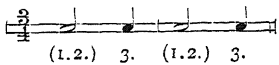
Both Herbert Spencer and Tyndall agree that rhythm is manifested in all forms of motion. It is an incontestable fact that there can be no rhythm without motion, and according to natural law there can also be no motion without rhythm. Therefore, when perfect rhythm is not manifested in motion, it must be because natural law is defeated by a counteracting force.

It is the preservation of rhythm which constitutes what we feel to be the most attractive feature in motion, repose. We feel the repose in motion, just as we feel the repose of proportion in form and of harmony in sound.

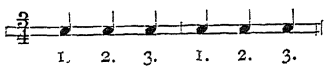
Nor is rhythm a limit to perfect freedom of motion; on the contrary, it is in freedom of motion that natural rhythm manifests itself. Nor must we think that rhythm always implies uniformity of motion. All motions properly and proportionately related to each other are rhythmic.

We have already said that perfect rhythm is perfect action and reaction. It is by no means necessary, however, that action and reaction should be equal in order to be perfect, for nature has infinite resources, and compensates for lack of time by greater force or impetus. Thus, the action may be slow and the reaction may be quick; but if the impetus of reaction be sufficient, the rhythm will be perfect, and it is always from the active force that the reactive force is supplied.

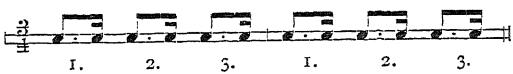
Triple time in music is a very simple illustration of this fact. In triple time, the accented part of the bar which represents action is twice as long as that which represents reaction, thus—



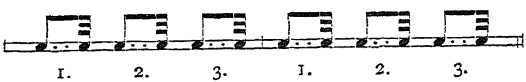
This unequal rhythm contains, however, the elements of equality, rhythm within rhythm, thus—



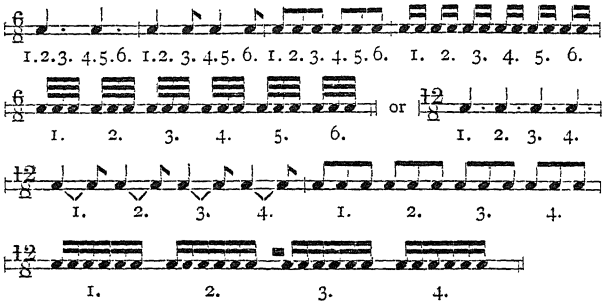
Again, it can be compounded, and in the equal rhythms within the unequal ones unequal rhythms can again be found. Thus—



or,



The following are other illustrations of unequal rhythms contained in equal rhythms, and again compounded—



I need not give more than these examples of simple and compound rhythms, as no doubt all varieties can be found in any musical primer.

The close observer will find all of these simple and compound rhythms in nature, as well as every thinkable modification of them.

In large pieces of machinery we also find represented an infinite variety of rhythms which have been isolated from nature and arbitrarily related to each other by intelligent man.

It is most interesting and suggestive to watch a huge machine in motion, and note the immense variety of rhythms, simple, compound, slow, quick, regular, and irregular, all working so harmoniously and in such perfect relation with one another. In observing the machine in motion, we should note, however, that no part thereof ever rests, but every part maintains a constant and persistent alternat-

ing or reversing of direction, which constitutes action and reaction.

The question now arises, How shall we apply the law of perfect action and reaction in breathing, or rhythmical breathing, to singing? It may be objected that rhythmical breathing can only be applied to singing in certain exercises purposely adapted to it; but that in songs, where arbitrary pauses of unequal length occur, and where oftentimes several measures succeed one another without any melodic pause for the necessary breath or reaction, rhythmical breathing is impossible. But this is only true so far as regards the regular physiological rhythm of breathing, but it is not true of rhythm broadly speaking. The regular rhythm of physiological breathing is, of course, out of the question in singing a musical composition, but a perfect rhythmic relation between the action represented by the musical phrase and the reaction represented by the breath must invariably be preserved.

Only when there is a prolonged pause in the melody can the relative rhythm of action and reaction between singing and breathing be arrested, and when this happens, the physiological rhythm of inhaling and exhaling temporarily reasserts itself, where the singer is free and in harmony with natural law.

To sum up, as there is no motion without rhythm, rhythm in singing can only be disturbed by the singer's substituting *rest* for reaction, or

fixity of position for passivity to natural law, which natural law demands reaction and not rest.

And here we reach the very kernel of our argument, and also the point which leads to its practical application.

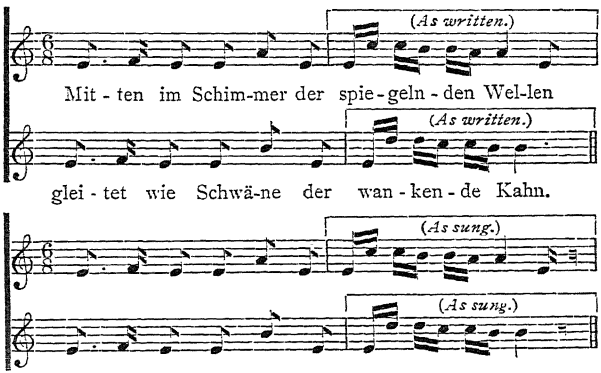
Where the singer remains physically passive to reaction in the pauses allotted in the musical composition, or to the stolen pauses where what is called the half-breath is taken, the natural law of motion, which is rhythm, will prevail in obtaining a sufficient reaction, in spite of the shortness of time or irregularity in measure. The singer, however, can hinder or defeat rhythm by utilizing the breathing space for rest instead of reaction. It is therefore necessary to guard against this error, and to do everything that is possible to conquer the habit of retaining a fixed position in any of the parts, and to induce in them a ready and natural rebound or reaction. For, whereas rest is the legitimate reaction of motion, it can never properly become a part of motion, when substituted for reaction. It must necessarily disturb or paralyze motion, because rest strikes at the inherent law of motion, which is rhythm, or action and reaction, and which in its turn is the consequence of persistence of force.

In all phrases or passages where the breath has to be taken quickly, the breathing space, or pause for reaction, should become a fraction of the musical rhythm. Any tardiness or lagging on the part of the singer will not only disturb the musical

rhythm, but also the proper order of action and reaction in the body.

The singer's instinct or feeling for the strict preservation of the musical rhythm will also prove a strong incentive to the reactive muscles, and aid much in conquering any stiffness or reluctance, where it may exist as a consequence of too much tension.

In melodies where the musical rhythm provides no rest for breathing, the last note of the measure or half-measure, where breath is needed, must be imperceptibly shortened, that it may be divided, either equally or unequally, according to the natural demand, between the musical tone and the breath. Thus—



For at all cost, the first note of the bar succeeding the breath must be exactly on the beat of time, and fully accented, because, where the rhythm is broken to make a space for breathing, the effect is

most tiresome and distressing, and the whole motion or rhythm of the song is disturbed.

Of course, there occur in musical compositions many passages where a broken rhythm is intended, and where the effect produced thereby is beautiful, by way of contrast. Such occasions also afford the singer a grateful rest from the constant motion of rhythm. But when, after such a passage, the rhythmic swing of the music is resumed, and the singer still lags and fails to fall in with it, the grateful effect of the broken rhythm is entirely spoiled.

It is so often objected that the muscles will not react quickly enough to permit breath to be taken, in passages where it has to be stolen, without interrupting the swing of the rhythm, that I recommend the practice of certain exercises for the purpose of inducing the reacting muscles to do their part quickly and effectually.

I also strongly recommend that all vocal exercises be sung strictly in time, with definite spaces for breathing, or pauses for reaction, as it will greatly help to cultivate the sense of rhythm in the singer, and thus bring him, both mentally and physically, into perfect harmony with the natural law of motion.

The following exercises, without voice, will greatly facilitate the preservation of relative rhythm in breathing, and also aid the singer in catching the quick breath.

Keep the teeth closed, and inhale always through

the nostrils. Take a deep, full breath before beginning the exercises.

(Without voice, but making the sound of sh as in shut.)

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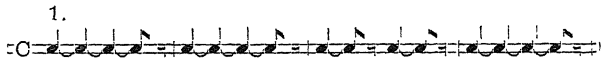

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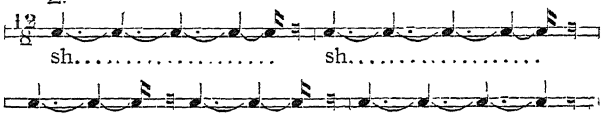

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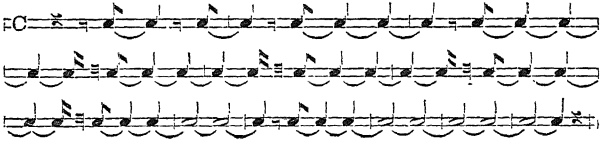

CHAPTER V

INDIVIDUALITY IN ART

As art is properly the expression of the individual, as it embodies the sum-total of truth and beauty which has been by him recognized and appropriated as his ideal, its form and method of expression must also be dictated by his own feelings and intelligence. Even the method of acquiring skill in expression must be intrinsically his own, as otherwise there can be no unity between his concept and its utterance, and consequently no spontaneity or vitality in the expression itself. This is true of all art forms, of all expression—of musical composition, painting, sculpture, poetry, the drama, of acting, oratory, of playing on any and every instrument, and last, not least, of singing.

Therefore, our aim should never be to imitate others, no matter how highly we may esteem their art, no matter how ardently we may desire to reach a like degree of excellence, for imitation relates to externals, and never strikes at the heart of things. To imitate is at best to grasp the shadow without the substance; and, moreover, in trying to imitate another we are relinquishing our power to express ourselves; we are ignoring our God-given concep-

tion of the true and beautiful, the expression of which is our highest achievement for the time being. Therefore, to relinquish this power to express our own individuality is like selling our birthright in art.

Every one is endowed with feelings peculiarly his own; each one is receptive to certain things which are meaningless to others. Two people, in reading the same book, are seldom impressed in the same way; each has his or her individual point of view, and each finds some profit and pleasure where the other does not. So, also, no two persons will by nature express themselves in the same way; there will be a difference somewhere, both of matter and manner, despite what conventionality has done to render people as much alike as possible. Everything in nature points to the maintenance of an individuality of will, an individuality of intelligence, and an individuality of expression. Therefore let us look to it that we defeat not the beneficent scheme of progress, as indicated in nature, by following perverted ideas of education; let us look to it that, like the servant who received the five talents and increased them to five more, and like him who received but two and increased them to two more, we each multiply and develop our natural gifts, be they great or small, each after his kind, that the Master, when he cometh, may say to the one as to the other, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

To this end, then, we must avoid the rut of imitation; for though it may sometimes be useful to imitate, as a temporary means to an end, though it may aid as a stepping-stone in the acquirement of improved methods, it is dangerous to individuality, if constantly practised, because it is in itself a limitation; because it induces artificiality; and because it mostly results in weakening, if not in paralyzing, our natural and peculiar powers of expression, by robbing us of freedom, which is an absolute essential to individuality in expression; for, as soon as we set up for ourselves a certain standard of excellence, even as a temporary goal, we engender eagerness, striving, a sense of responsibility, a lack of simplicity, and all the qualities and conditions which prevent freedom. If, in practising, our aim is simply to express what we feel at the moment, without being troubled as to whether that expression will be as beautiful as some other; if we only require from ourselves in each utterance a *sample* of our latent power, we take no responsibility, and therefore we shall express ourselves with freedom. But if, on the other hand, our aim be to express ourselves in this way, or in that, according to a certain rule, model, or standard, we at once put ourselves under bonds to reach a particular point, and immediately all sense of freedom is lost. If we would be free, we must seek simply to express *ourselves*, remembering meanwhile that the unexpressed is always an unknown quantity. We express that we may

know it. Thus, each utterance is, in its turn, a joy to us, because it brings us a new recognition of ourselves. Again, each new recognition begets a new conception, and each conception begets a new impulse for its own manifestation, and in this way expression and conception ever continue to act and react on each other. The impulse is ever onward, for there is no finality in any knowledge, power, or recognition of ours; we are always subject to the next step, the next new light, the next more perfect expression. But we take delight in each free, untrammelled utterance, because, though it may be crude, it is our *all* for the moment; because it is that same crude expression which makes the next less crude expression possible, and which leads, step by step, to the perfected expression of its kind.

It is in freedom, therefore, that the development of our individuality and our skill in its expression must depend. It follows, then, that as freedom and imitation are inimical to each other, imitation is to be condemned on this ground also.

It is a notable fact that where there is a strong imitative faculty there is seldom originality or creative power, so called; the two gifts are seldom united to any extent in the same person. This is doubtless because the mind, which occupies itself habitually with what is on the surface, cannot adapt itself easily to that which lies at the heart or centre.

We have known certain people whose powers

of imitation were so wonderful that they were able to reproduce perfectly the tone, the gesture, the facial expression—in fact, all the characteristics of any actor with whose style they were familiar. This power led to the inference that they themselves possessed the necessary gifts for great actors; but, when the trial was made, they failed utterly, in every case, to fulfil the hopes they had raised, and their performances proved to be totally lacking in the charm and strength which distinguished their imitations of other actors, much to the surprise of their admirers. This result was, however, the natural outcome of the over-developed faculty for imitation, which unfitted them for an individual interpretation of any kind. By constantly seeking to reproduce the characteristic features of other people's expression, they had ceased to have anything of their own to express. Their own individuality was practically lost in a wilderness of other individualities.

Those who are endowed by nature with the power to comprehend what rests beneath the surface, to grasp the principles which underlie the manifested facts which embody them, should never have recourse to imitation.

But there are always those who are unable to seize upon abstract ideas or underlying principles, and who are also incapable of originating for themselves a method for the acquisition of greater skill in anything; to such, imitation is the only medium for progress. Children, for instance, acquire

much of their technical education through imitation; they can be taught to do many things without understanding why or how they are done, with the result that with them great excellence in technique often becomes automatic by the time their intellects are sufficiently developed to comprehend the laws which govern the skill in expression which they have already attained. The use of imitation, therefore, belongs of right to children, and to those whose intellectual powers are no more developed than those of children, as otherwise they would be debarred from progress; but where the power exists to penetrate through effects to causes and perceive the essential laws which govern beauty, it becomes a sort of moral suicide to follow any model, no matter how fine that model may be.

As a rule, natural law has happily provided against this danger of moral suicide, by making it difficult for those possessed of strong individuality to acquire skill through imitation; for the very need of their being brings into play their intelligence and grasp, to the end that their individuality may be maintained. But where that individuality is less dominating, teachers can do much towards weakening or even destroying this divine birthright, by imposing their own peculiar methods on all pupils alike, instead of offering them free choice of the manifold and various roads by which their goal may be reached.

If, then, the practice of imitation is to be dis-

carded as a means to progress by the full-fledged human intellect, what place shall we give to example, in the onward and upward stretch towards development and the perfect expression of our latent powers? Shall example have no direct influence in changing our methods, or in altering our views of the relations of cause and effect?

The force of example works in more ways than one for reformation—sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly, sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously; that must depend on the nature and temperament of its object; but unless each one who would profit by example allows the higher and finer expression which he emulates to penetrate to his very heart, and thus arouse his will to new impulse—unless his mind adapts to that new impulse its own form, and obtains from the body its own expression, example will bear no fruits to nourish the spirit.

It is surely of untold value to listen to the performances of other artists, if, in doing so, we seek to discover whatever revelation of the true and beautiful their expression may hold for us, because in this way we gain experience vicariously. Each artist has hammered out for himself some one thing, at least, that another has not; and thus there is always something to be learned from the humblest performer, provided we are able to recognize the pearl in the oyster, or the flower among the weeds. Listening to others and viewing other people's work is of service to us in yet other ways.

For instance, we often recognize in their performance or productions some mannerism which we have ignorantly indulged in ourselves, and our realization of the unpleasing effect of that mannerism in their production naturally leads to a mental resolution to eradicate it in ourselves, which mental resolution will, in time, surely work out its own purpose. The usefulness of vicarious experience in art, as in all things, is undeniable, where its use is fully understood; but where that use is perverted, by a bald reproduction of such external features as may have appealed to us in the other's expression, it must be, I repeat, at the cost of our individuality, and a deadening of our real possibilities.

In listening to the performances of other artists, we should hold ourselves simply receptive to the impression thereof. Should that impression be pleasurable or the reverse, we should use our intelligence to discover *why* we are pleased or offended. This will lead to a mental analysis which will assist in forming and cultivating our judgment, which judgment is so bound up with our aspirations towards a more perfected state that the two can never be divorced, nor can we discuss the one without the other; for the judgment, as a reactive medium for progressive aspiration, must be independent if it is to be preserved and developed, independence of judgment being as essential to individuality as independence of concept and expression.

This same judgment is nature's reactive medium for progress, because, whatever we recognize of beauty and truth in the expression of another, is as some fresh mental pabulum, which we seize upon, consume, digest, and which is then assimilated by our higher consciousness. It is thus that, by being passively receptive to the effect of another's performance or production, and by accepting the feelings awakened thereby as our future law, our individuality in art becomes stimulated, strengthened, higher, more fully developed; and that our will, which works in its service, becomes more positive in action, and ever more vital in its impulse to express that something more of truth and beauty which has now become our own aspiration; for whatever we spontaneously recognize of truth or beauty is now *our* truth, *our* beauty—mental recognition being really mental appropriation.

But this judgment of ours—can we rely on it? Are we not often mistaken in accepting as beautiful something which is by higher authorities pronounced commonplace or defective? And what of that? Judgments must always differ, for they depend on the plane of mental and spiritual development where he who judges stands. We can never be mistaken in accepting as beautiful that which really delights us. If it be beautiful to us, that is enough, for whatever appeals to our existing sense of beauty embodies all that we are, for the moment, capable of appreciating; and the recognition of that *all* fits us for the next step in

discernment, for the next higher degree of receptiveness.

What each one perceives of the beautiful, in either nature or art, concerns himself alone, and no one has a right to impose his impressions on another, nor to hold in contempt feelings expressed by those who are not on his particular plane of receptiveness. Besides, where in art is absolute beauty to be found? Eye hath not seen it, ear hath not heard it. The soul of man must, in the fulness of its recognitions, burst through those limits which he, in the darkness of ignorance, has himself built up around it, before that note of beauty can be voiced which shall charm all mankind, with one accord, into the gladness of praise. Until then, beauty can only exist for us as an ascending scale, each note of which responds to that key-note to which each individual is tuned. For instance, children and all primitive people prefer crude, gaudy colors to the more subdued tints and blendings of color which appeal to the educated eye. Of pictures, they prefer such as represent something out of the little groups of objects with which they have become familiar during their limited experience. Show a child the rudest picture of some object which he recognizes, and he will be transported with delight; on the other hand, show him the finest picture of something which is strange to him, and it will make little or no impression on him. This indicates that the degree of illumination and delight which we receive from

art is measured by our immediate and relative power of recognition. A little later on, the child ceases to care for the picture of a horse or a dog, but demands something with action, or that tells a little story: the horse must be falling over a precipice; the dog must be catching a rabbit or saving the life of a child. As he develops further, the simple story told by the picture no longer moves him; the story must be symbolic; there must be some idea, some conception, back of the story itself. Then the romantic phase has its turn; portrayals of wild danger, of extravagant heroism, hair-breadth escapes, noble sacrifices, appeal to him above all else, both in art and literature. As his nature grows finer and higher, he reaches out for those expressions in art which appeal more to his emotions; and still onward towards that higher plane, where the intellect and the emotions whisper to each other in holy communion; still ever upward to those heights where the chord is struck which echoes in his soul, where a true picture of simple nature or of human life brings to him the conception of the divine truth which illuminates the whole, from the blade of grass, the trembling branches of a tree, to the multitudinous seas, and the heavens above the seas.

And shall not this growing creature be fed and nourished at each stage of his growth? While he is only capable of humble aspirations, shall its object be denied him? Surely art, like religion, is broad enough to yield something which will be an

inspiration and education to the humblest as well as to the greatest of God's creatures.

Therefore, in art there must always exist every thinkable grade of expression, from the lowly to the lofty, to meet the respective needs of those who co-vibrate to the lowest as well as to each ascending note in the scale of beauty. So let each one utter his own individual note in art, whether it be lowly or lofty, since each utterance, according to its kind and degree, will find some hungry soul to which his note is attuned.

We can, therefore, make no mistake in accepting as a new aspiration whatever appeals to us as beautiful in art, no matter what other and higher authorities may pronounce against it. If we will only refrain from posing as *connoisseurs* of art, and try instead to fulfil simply nature's law of selection, we shall obtain from art that which we really need for our enlightenment and progress, and that which we can readily assimilate; like unto the sparrow, who sips from the flowing stream enough to satisfy his thirst, regardless of the deeper draughts of the oxen which stand beside him on the brink. But if, instead, we permit ourselves to be led, through vanity or the fear of contempt, to assume a taste not our own, or should we even strive to see with the eyes of our more authoritative neighbor, we shall swallow a pabulum which we can neither digest nor assimilate, and instead of our judgment waxing finer and higher, it will not only remain undeveloped, but also lose the power of acting by

itself at all. If we are to utter our own note, we must listen with our own ears, we must look with our own eyes, we must reach out with our own hands. To express as individuals, we must both judge and select as individuals.

To conclude, individuality is the hall-mark of greatness, as the distinguishing characteristic of mediocrity is lack of individuality. Every great painter, every great composer, every great poet, orator, preacher, actor, player, and singer, has stood out a distinct and individual interpreter of truth; for each one has voiced a note unheard before in the harmonies of the universe; each has brought his own separate message to humanity, and with that message a new blessing. And such is the power of individuality that each in his turn has been a law-giver, both to his contemporaries and to posterity; for each great master is the unconscious founder of a school. But the followers of a master, though they are held within safe limits by very force of the enunciated truth to which they cling, though they cannot go astray and lose themselves, yet neither do they leave aught that is new with their fellows to mark their coming and going. The world is not the richer for their contributions, for, as these are without individuality, they simply merge into the school which gave rise to their production. Their works represent superfluous props to an edifice which already stands firmly on its own base, for truth needs no corroboration, beauty needs no advertisement; they are sufficient unto themselves.

If he who is educated in a certain school perceives and appropriates by selection the basic principles of art evolved by the masters of that school, and then branches out for himself from the main trunk of accepted truth, gathering the pollen of others' expressions, the fruits of his recognitions will never be degraded to mere reflections of a master. As natural law asserts itself in the differentiation of species, so must man create a harmony between himself and nature by recognizing the law of differentiation in thought and expression. All individuality is due to the preservation of this law. The more positively the differentiation of established formulas, of accepted theories and ideas, shows forth in expression, the more original does that expression appear to us. Originality in any other sense does not exist; for there is nothing original under the sun save the Logos, or universal expression of the divine truth, and that was not originated by man.

As the purpose of man's intellectual life is to *interpret* that expression of divine truth, to that end every differentiated recognition, every differentiated thought, which each individual may be capable of expressing is needed by mankind (as a whole), in order that the great human family may at length, by virtue of vicarious at-one-ment, grasp the full meaning of that divine expression, and join in the triumphant chorus which with quickened impulse, when the sun has risen in their souls, shall voice that mighty Logos in unison.

CHAPTER VI

A WORD ABOUT TEACHING

It is better to point out what is right than to draw attention to what is wrong.

If the mind of the pupil is thoroughly imbued with the right idea of tone in the abstract, if he recognizes perfection in tone, the ideal which the mind has formed will sooner or later find adequate expression through the voice. This recognition itself is usually a gradual process, and it is better to be patient and await the time when the consciousness of and desire for perfection is fully awakened, than to seek to hasten the process by emphasizing the defects. For where defects are unduly emphasized, they take on gigantic proportions in the mind of the singer, and possess the consciousness to the exclusion of everything else. Thus the defects continue to express themselves in an augmented degree, and may take firmer root than before.

I have stated in preceding chapters that perfect sound cannot be attained without freedom, spontaneity, and concentration of energy or singleness of purpose. It follows, then, that the mind of the pupil must not be hampered with the thought of

things to be avoided; for how can there be singleness of purpose if the pupil is thinking of what he must guard against, as well as of what he desires to do, at one and the same time? If the whole courage, the whole energy, the whole consciousness, the whole heart of the singer are needed for the tone-impulse—which tone-impulse is, in effect, the perfect, the true, the spontaneous tone-attack—the thought of what is wrong, of what is to be avoided, of what is to be feared, must not obtrude itself or invade the consciousness. Only the positive side must be dwelt on; for if the positive side is to prevail, it must be strong; and if the positive is to be strong, the negative must be held in abeyance. This is exactly the point where an intelligent and properly equipped teacher can be a godsend to the young singer, by sparing him years and years of fruitless striving; for the intelligent teacher perceives the defect, and has it in his power to apply the remedy without even giving his reasons; so that the hopeless agony of consciously trying to do right, and consciously trying not to do wrong, both at once, need not be suffered by the singer, who instead can give himself wholly up to the beautiful, the perfect, aspect of his purpose. He can steadily and surely climb upward towards the right, without being pulled back by the leaden weight of wrong attached to his feet.

The qualifications of the teacher, therefore, are of vital importance to the singer. The teacher must possess—1st, an absolute and unerring feel-

ing for the perfect vocal sound; 2d, he must recognize immediately the smallest deviation from that perfection; 3d, he must be able to analyze in what that deviation consists, and in what particular perversion of process it has its immediate cause; 4th, his knowledge of the vocal mechanism must enable him to adapt the proper exercises to the actual needs of the pupil; 5th, he must be able to constantly furnish the pupil with examples of the perfect sound, either in his own voice or the voice of another, and also to point out immediately the sporadic occurrences of the correct sound in the voice of the pupil himself; 6th, he must be endowed with infinite patience, discretion, hopefulness, and last, not least, with an intense interest and love for his work. These are not common qualities, but neither is an intelligent and perfectly equipped teacher a common product. Of these it may, indeed, with truth be said, "Many are called, but few are chosen."

It is so much easier to point out defects than it is to prescribe their remedy, that the negative method of teaching most frequently prevails. In fact, the temptation to declare the defects is very strong—nay, almost irresistible; but it is not to be encouraged, and it should be part of the teacher's education to abandon that habit where it exists.

There may be some cases where to point out the specific defect may be a necessity; for instance, where some perversion of process has already become deeply rooted—where it is, in fact, already

automatic, so that even the sporadic occurrence of the correct tone is an impossibility, or where the pupil connects the wrong habit persistently and unconsciously with his purpose; but even in such cases let the teacher first have recourse to indicating and enforcing the practice of certain exercises for relaxing and rendering plastic the offending parts.

Of course no iron-clad rules can be laid down in detail in this or in anything else. No two pupils are exactly alike, or on exactly the same plane of development or recognition; some are much more sensitive to impressions than others; and it is in adapting his knowledge to the receptive powers of the pupil that the teacher displays his discrimination, his discretion, his power, his mastery. The one broad rule, however, is, Hold up constantly what is good, and do not emphasize what is bad. It is time enough for the pupil to recognize the bad in the distance, when he is well clear of it.

If the pupil constantly hears the correct tone; if, in hearing it, he recognizes it at once; if he practises faithfully and persistently with that correct tone as his object of desire, always confident of attaining it, always steadily observant of the quality of the tone itself in its effect; he will, in so doing, gradually come to a recognition of the laws involved in the production of perfect tone. Then will he have reached a point where all that is wrong, all that is perversion, will have ceased to be a hopeless burden, but will appear instead as a

rung of the ladder, on which to plant the foot while mounting to the next higher.

Then will the pupil, in his turn, have become a master, and then can he go forth to lighten the way for other aspirants.

CHAPTER VII

STAGE-FRIGHT: ITS CAUSE AND ITS CURE

THERE are but few of us who have not, at some time or other, experienced the effect of what is commonly termed "stage-fright"—that conscious and dominating nervousness which accompanies a public appearance. Many of us have suffered from it in our own persons, and know it as a paralyzing of our forces and faculties—a temporary undoing or defeating of what nature and art combined have done for us. Others of us have observed its effects in those whose capabilities were known to us, and whose performances in public, in consequence of stage-fright, have utterly belied those capabilities.

And yet, when we ask what *is* stage-fright—is it an effect or is it a cause?—we find, from the vague answers we receive, that the general tendency is to regard it as a cause, because it produces the effect of temporary paralysis of power and freedom in action or expression. In this way people have gradually come to accept stage-fright as an unavoidable evil—a something vague and mysterious which may fasten upon any one of us at any time, without warning or possibility of defence—as an evil spirit, which is liable to clutch us in its relent-

less grasp, and hold in thraldom that accumulated power of expression which we, in a lifetime of patient endeavor, have legitimately acquired.

Stage-fright is, however, we say, first of all an effect, its immediate cause being lack of proper concentration, which lack of concentration has its real cause in egotism.

This statement may shock some of my readers, who may object that, on the contrary, it is timidity and a lack of confidence in one's own powers that produce stage-fright. Well and good! But timidity itself is only one of the many forms in which self-consciousness or egotism manifests itself; for, if we were not concerned about the impression we produce on others, we should never be timid in our bearing, or afraid of not doing our best; but, instead, we should be simple, direct, and fearless as little children, before the demon of self-consciousness has taken possession of them.

If the artist, instead of desiring to distinguish himself as an individual, and to win the admiration of the public for his own attainments, were to regard himself only as a messenger of a sublime truth to his auditors, as an instrument by which the public shall be fed and nourished, inspired and exalted, he would only think of his message, and only be possessed with the desire to deliver that message faithfully, simply, and directly, according to the means allotted to him at that time by nature and circumstance for that purpose. Thus, all his consciousness would be concentrated on the

one noble purpose of his art, and there would be none left to wander to the public or to the results of his performance. In a word, egotism, or consideration of self, being eliminated, the concentration would be perfect, and with perfect concentration, stage-fright would be an impossibility.

Let us endeavor to analyze what stage-fright really is, to recall some of the different ways in which it manifests itself, and to point out more fully how it has its genesis in egotism.

Stage-fright is simply a loss of balance, a loss of mental and moral equilibrium, which manifests itself in many different ways, varying both in kind and in degree in different people, but always resulting in a weakening or paralyzing of the natural powers of the individual, and causing him to misrepresent himself as an aggregate of feeling, perception, knowledge, and skill in expression.

In some, stage-fright is productive, either directly or indirectly, of excessive nervous and muscular tension, which makes it impossible for the physical instrument of expression, the body, to respond readily or adequately to the will.

In others, it produces an agitation, a ruffling of the spirit, an undue excitement, a blind and boisterous effort, or a hopeless confusion in expression. In others again, it brings about a staggering, a helplessness, a fainting away of the physical forces; which condition again reacts on the spirit, consuming the courage, and even annihilating the power of the will itself.

And to think that such a fatal upset of our whole organization, such a pathetic belying of our true nature should be accepted by us as a natural condition, as something constitutional, something not to be avoided, not to be eradicated!

This constantly recurring unbalanced condition which we often call constitutional nervousness is, however, nothing more or less than a deeply rooted habit of wrong thinking which has become automatic. Let us take courage in this thought, and begin at once to deal with it as we would with any other bad habit which we have learned to recognize, to deplore, and which we desire to master.

The idea has become almost conventional that the overwrought nervous condition which is one of the many degrees or phases of stage-fright belongs properly to the artist temperament; that, in fact, a *lack* of nervous excitement is felt by the audience in a coldness and deliberateness of expression on the part of the artist. Let us consider how much truth, if any, there may be in this theory, and also, on what the theory itself is based.

In the first place, we must not confuse the overwrought nervous condition of which we are speaking with the emotional nature which properly belongs to the artist; nor must we confuse the absence of the emotional element in the artist's performance with the absence of nervous excitement. The true artist should possess an ardent, emotional nature which is easily stirred and excited. This stirring and excitement of the emotions seems to

carry him beyond the limits of his capacity, and makes him soar higher than himself; though, in reality, it simply lifts him for the time being to that highest level which he habitually regards as his ideal.

There are, however, many followers of art whose emotional nature cannot be easily awakened and stirred into action. With these, every form of expression is necessarily a conscious and deliberate act, and consequently must lack both life and spontaneity, and must fail to move their audience. In them, the emotion of fear does not respond to the thought of the audience nor to the possibility of failure, and the emotion of desire or eagerness does not respond to the thought of the resulting applause. So that, in spite of the most supreme egotism and wrong direction of thought, such would preserve their serenity and accomplish all that they are at any time capable of achieving before any audience and under any conditions. Every undesirable state has its compensations, and the follower of art whose emotions are dull is, at least, always sure that he will never fall below his normal dead level of technical excellence, and, moreover, that that technical excellence will obtain full recognition from the audience. He is also spared the agony of premonitory fears and of distressful retrospection. These are great compensations, it is true, from the point of view of the creature; but when we consider that such art is, after all, art minus its essential power, minus the

true ennobling purpose of art, which is the expression of the emotions fresh and vital from the soul of man, such petty personal compensations shrink into insignificance, and we feel that they are purchased at too high a price.

The reason why the theory has taken root that an overwrought nervous condition in facing an audience belongs naturally to the artist temperament is, because the public performer is, by virtue of his very life, forced into an atmosphere where the impression produced by his art on the public is regarded as the only important thing connected with art. With the majority, alas! success with the public means so much, while art itself means so little! This causes the artist to exaggerate mentally the importance and power of the audience, as such, and incites his thoughts to dwell on it as the objective point of his art, instead of concentrating his thoughts, his desires, his all, on the part he himself plays in art's great purpose.

It is true that the public is actually the objective point of the artist, but the public is also passive as the target at which the marksman aims. Would thinking about the target steady the hand, or add in any way to the skill of the marksman? The good marksman does not consider the target; he gives his whole attention to his aim, and the target receives the effect of that aim. It is, however, so universal for artists to fall into the error of considering their audience, instead of concentrating their whole selves in what they are doing,

that the consequence of this error, namely, nervous excitement, or loss of balance, has become a *habit* of the artist temperament, and has been accepted by the majority as something inherent in the artist, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh. This habit would, however, never have taken root had the artists themselves early in the day stopped to consider and to properly analyze the true relation between cause and effect, instead of accepting the conventional theories with regard to stage-fright. It should be, in point of fact, just as simple, just as easy for us to do any given thing that we are capable of doing, in the presence of thousands of people, as to do it without witnesses or auditors; for the audience in itself cannot really affect our capacity to do. It is passive; it must first respond to our performance; we cannot expect to do aught in response to it, though, when once a magnetic current is generated, through the power of the artist, between him and the public, public and artist act and react one on the other, always more and more, until a perfectly sympathetic co-vibration between them is set up and firmly established, which becomes in its turn a help and inspiration to the artist, causing him to rise above his average possibilities. Up to the time that such a sympathetic current is established, however, the audience is actually, and should be, nothing more to the artist than a set of ninepins that are set up in front of him, passively waiting to be bowled over. The only thing, therefore, that really concerns the pub-

lic performer is, that he should be properly equipped for his performance. By properly equipped I mean, that he should have reached a condition of perfect security in his art, or, in other words, have reached the stage where all that relates to technique has become automatic. In such a case there is no possible way in which the public itself can affect him to his undoing.

This brings us at once to the inevitable conclusion that any initial influence of the public on the performer is purely a figment of his own brain; and as no reasonable being who acknowledges a thing to be an illusion or a fiction can permit himself to be affected by it, so the vague idea so erroneously maintained by many, that stage-fright has any solid basis for existence in the audience itself, must be abandoned, and some more tenable theory accepted in its place.

The truth is, that the performer, instead of giving his whole thought, his whole will, his whole energy to what he is doing, be it playing, singing, reciting, or anything else, divides his thought and his desire between his audience and his performance, and the audience generally ends by getting the largest share of his consciousness.

Instead of every note or phrase he plays or sings being a simple and direct act of will, properly directed by the intelligence, as it might be were he playing or singing alone, his thoughts are diffused, and his will weakened and imperfectly directed in consequence.

It stands to reason that if, at the same time that he is playing or singing, he is also hoping to impress his audience, to prove to them how excellent an artist he is, wondering whether they will recognize his powers; or if, on the other hand, he is fearing that he may fail to do his best, to show the full measure of his capacity, there must be a division of energy between the will which is directed to the purpose, or performance, and his desire for a certain result or effect of that performance. Now, if desire is what lies back of will-power, and what supplies its impulse and energy, the proportion of desire for the result or effect on the audience must draw away just so much energy from the will, which properly should be directed to the performance itself. Thus, the will must be weakened by the artist dividing his consciousness between his immediate purpose and its result.

But this is not all, for when the thought of the possible result of our performance is once initiated, it starts an activity of brain which leads inevitably to an imagining of vain things and to a most unprofitable expenditure of valuable energy in many different directions. It is this diffusion of energy and this confusion of thought which constitute that unbalanced condition, that paralysis of the will and its physical instrument, the body, which we call stage-fright. This nervous condition, or unbalancing of our organization, is by no means confined to the actual time of the public ordeal itself; it often anticipates it for days,

or even weeks. Many a sleepless, agitated night is passed by the singer before a first appearance in a new city, or before the assumption of a new rôle in an opera, as also by an actor under similar conditions. Why? Because he encourages his thoughts to dwell on his hopes or fears regarding his performance and its results, instead of simply working to fit himself for that performance in every way, mentally, morally, and physically, as well as he has it in his power to do, by practising carefully, regularly, and earnestly, by living healthfully, and sleeping as much as is necessary for the full recuperation of the forces, and leaving the results to nature and to that universal law which does not permit the fig-tree to bring forth thistles.

I hear some of my readers objecting, "How can we help thinking about an event of so great importance to us? Or how can we help fearing that we may not do ourselves justice when the awful moment arrives? Or how can we help hoping and praying that we may be equal to the occasion, and that we may be able to show ourselves at our best?" Simply by recognizing that to think about results over which we have no control is not only unprofitable, but dangerous. That instead of augmenting our power and strength, it both saps them and ends by defeating our real purpose, which purpose is all that we have been working for. When we fully recognize this simple fact, we shall cease to waste our energy of thought

in this unreasonable manner, and we shall begin to concentrate that energy where it is needed, instead of scattering it to the winds of vain imaginings.

As reasonable beings, we should say to ourselves, "Am I able to do this thing, sing this opera, song, or whatever it may be? If I am able, then I will do it, because there can be nothing to hinder me. Should any unforeseen evil intervene, in the shape of some outside condition which I cannot control, I must accept it patiently, because I cannot help it in any way; but that which I can control—namely, myself—that I certainly will control. No thought of the public shall invade me; no thought of anything outside of just what I am doing shall disturb my serenity. I am what I am! I can accomplish only as much as I can; therefore, let me simply look to it that by no diversion of my thoughts I accomplish less than I can, and thus discount myself in my own eyes." If, instead of taking this rational view of the matter, we encourage our thoughts to dwell on all the possible mishaps that may befall; if we allow anxiety—that most useless and baneful activity of the imagination—to take possession of us, we exhaust our courage and strength before the moment when its activity is required of us. It is like allowing the steam to escape which is to supply the motive power of the engine.

Again, by permitting our thoughts to linger on the possible results of our purpose, we are allowing

them to form the habit of regarding the wrong goal. The goal is, as I have said, the purpose or act of expression itself, and not its immediate effect on others, nor the result of that expression in any shape or form.

If we allow the thoughts habitually to dwell on the wrong, the negative, or unprofitable side of things, they will soon fly in that direction on all occasions unbidden, and a habit of morbid anxiety and dread, or of feverish anticipation and eagerness, soon becomes established in the mind. These unruly thoughts produce an immediate effect on the body, and they also react powerfully on the spirit. We all of us know that if we only *think* of an exciting event about to take place in which we are personally concerned, the heart begins to beat faster, the blood rushes to the head, and a general feeling of agitation and unrest at once pervades us.

We are really at such times creating all the *real* elements of the event, that is, all that is emotional already exists for us subjectively. We go through the whole agony, and suffer the consequent exhaustion. And what exhaustion! There is no expenditure of energy so prodigal as that where we supply with our imagination all the different factors in an event. At one moment we are the actors (in imagination), at another, we are acted upon; we are both performer and public, both cause and effect; we not only sing our own part, but we play the orchestral accompaniments; we

shift the scenes, we perform the other parts in the piece, we supply with our imagination all the energy which in the actual event is distributed between many different agents.

Is it surprising that such a debauch of mental activity should lead to an over-excited condition of the nervous system, to sleeplessness, and finally to nervous exhaustion?

We are all of us more or less familiar with the fact that before a public performance, or an ordeal of any kind, even though we may be purposely occupying ourselves with something else in order to draw our thoughts away from the dreaded event, yet at intervals we are conscious of flushing, and a general tremor overtakes us in spite of ourselves, like unto that which seizes upon us when we are thinking of what is to come. This is simply automatism manifesting itself in unconscious cerebration. The habit of premonitory fear of results which we have ignorantly encouraged and allowed to take root now continues without our will, without even our consciousness.

To permit such a state of things to exist without taking every measure in our power to overcome it, is to lay ourselves open to many evils, of which nervous prostration stands at the head of the list; for this needless, unreasonable, unprofitable brooding over things, either past or to come, is what undermines and unbalances us more than anything else can.

Many people of strength and determination

will tell you that stage-fright can be controlled. By that they generally mean that, in spite of their invincible agitation, they can compel a certain exterior calmness and self-possession. This exterior control is, however, at the expense of a terrible nervous strain; and it is, moreover, productive of such great tension in the body that the effect of such restraint on the artist's performance is almost worse than that of the unbridled nervousness itself; for it produces a hard, congealed, and unmagnetic bearing and expression; and again, the amount of energy expended in this restraint is just so much energy stolen from its proper subject. While, at least, where the artist's agitation is apparent, it in a measure accounts for, and partially excuses, his shortcomings in the eyes of the public.

Where an artist is still at the mercy of stage-fright, it is far better not to resist the physical expression thereof, but to accept it with its accompanying possible devitalization, for this same devitalization may be the means of saving the performer from utter defeat; for where the artist is technically sure of what he has to do, but has been in the habit of ignorantly using too much tension, the devitalized state of the muscles will come blindly to the rescue, and give freedom to the forces that have been held in restraint.

We have known of many instances where the performer, under the effects of staggering stage-fright, has achieved a success that he never could

have hoped for had he been in his normal condition; inasmuch as, in the latter case, he would surely have done something towards consciously regulating his muscles, and thus have detracted from the spontaneity, naturalness, and magnetic quality of his expression; whereas the devitalization induced by his surrender to stage-fright worked as a counteracting influence, and caused him to build better than he knew.

This may be accounted for by the fact that in this case stage-fright caused the victim to "lose his head"; that head which had been the instrument of his perverted thought; and through the paralyzing of that same instrument his body was relaxed and thus set free to respond to the emotions. In other words, one of the objective points of diffused consciousness being cut off, through a partial mental paralysis, it resulted in that consciousness being concentrated in feeling, and automatism did the rest.

This last citation is not to be understood as a plea for unconditional surrender to stage-fright, but simply as a warning against resisting its external or physical effects, where the evil still exists intrinsically.

Stage-fright must be radically cured, but to merely control its external expression is not to cure it, and, up to the time when it is uprooted, it is better to give up to it physically than to use the degree of tension necessary to control entirely its external expression.

There is one form of stage-fright that I have not yet touched upon, and it is that where the performer does not feel sure of his own capacity, and is, on that account, nervously unhinged. In this case it is not fear of the public, but fear of himself which assails him. The *effect* of the one fear, however, is identical with that of the other, inasmuch as the consciousness which is absorbed in the dread of appearing at a disadvantage, no matter what the cause, is just so much consciousness or energy which is withdrawn from its proper seat of concentration, and, therefore, just so much energy wasted. In consequence of this waste of energy, the will is not properly vitalized, and the mental direction of the will is rendered imperfect, with the usual resultant, loss of balance.

In such a case, of course, the initial mistake lies in the performer undertaking a task for which he has not yet properly fitted himself. But, given the fact that he, for any cause whatsoever, is to run the risk of an immature performance, he may yet be able to achieve—before the public, at least—that degree of excellence which he reaches at home, if he will only concentrate his thoughts on doing as well as he can, without eagerness and without fear of failure. But if, on the contrary, he allows his thoughts to wander to his sense of insecurity, that insecurity will at once be registered in his performance, or, to use a familiar expression, he will "lose his head."

To sum up, then: Where an artist is entirely en-

grossed with his art, and is not considering either public opinion or its consequences to him, direct or indirect, but, instead, regards his relation to the public rather as the relation of the sun to the earth—something to be illuminated and warmed into life by its intrinsic, its natural power, which can neither be added to nor lessened by any influence from the earth itself—the artist will have concentrated power just as the sun has concentrated light and heat; and the full effect of the artist's power will be felt by the public, and responded to by their higher enlightenment, just as the earth responds to the sunshine by its wealth of vegetation, its flowers, and its perfumes.

So much for what relates to the moral and mental attitude of the artist; which moral and mental attitude, let it be remembered, lies at the root of the self-control which every public performer yearns to attain. There can be no perfect concentration without a total abandonment of all egotism, of all consideration of self, without an utter surrender of self to art for its own sake, with its underlying glorious and ennobling purpose.

This point of view, this right thinking, is necessary before all else, and can only be reached after conviction by dwelling on the truth, and ardently and honestly trying to embody it in every act of life, both public and private.

But there is yet another victory to gain, though of a less exalted character; it is the victory over

the body, which has taken the habit of responding to the unbalanced thought of the individual by a disturbance of the physiological rhythms. The heart, which has been in the habit of beating louder and faster; the breath, which has been in the habit of growing shorter; the nerves and muscles, which have been in the habit of growing abnormally tense at the thought of appearing before the public, will still continue to do these things automatically, by association of ideas, in spite of the change in direction of thought; so, let us consider what may be done to prevent defeat through a resisting automatism.

The remedy is simple, and absolutely effectual. It consists in re-establishing the physiological rhythms, and thus causing the body to work once more in harmony with the mind and will.

How shall we accomplish this? By recognizing in what particular way the disturbance is manifested in the body, and then giving our whole attention to counteracting it there.

At the first symptoms of stage-fright, wherever there is excessive tension we must set about relaxing that tension at once, quietly and deliberately; and, at the slightest recurrence of too much tension, relax again and again. This will at once relieve the nervous strain. Then make a long series of inhalations and exhalations very gently and regularly, always observing the strictest rhythm. For instance, mentally count two, slowly, during the act of inhaling, and two during the act of

exhaling. The body must remain relaxed and free meanwhile.

This little device, simple though it may be, is nevertheless very far-reaching. In the first place, it acts in re-establishing the normal physiological rhythms much in the same way as does the artificial respiration employed in resuscitating a drowned man, by starting and re-establishing the natural respiration. The heart and pulses quickly resume their normal action where the gentle rhythmic breathing and relaxation of muscles are persevered in; and this gentle rhythmic action in the body reacts again on the other organisms, which sympathetically respond to the call to order and harmony from without.

Again, the strict attention that must necessarily be given to maintaining an equal space of time for inbreathing and outbreathing, draws the thoughts away from the disturbing cause, thus enforcing a certain concentration of mind, which, of course, tells at once in freeing the will from the ruffled and confused thoughts induced by dread of the approaching ordeal.

In this way proper equilibrium or unity of purpose is once more established between the different organisms, and perfect harmony in expression can once more prevail.

If these directions are faithfully followed, the perverted automatism of both mind and body—which has for generations been working on the spirit of artists who are before the public, to the

extent that it has hitherto been by them accepted as a cross to be borne instead of an obstacle to be overcome—will gradually disappear like dew before the sun, and the artist will be able once more triumphantly to express, to recognize, and to make valid the full measure of his power, and remain under all circumstances, whether in public or in private, every inch himself.

SUMMARY

THE conclusions, then, that we are to draw from the "Philosophy of Singing" are:

First. That the expression of our latent powers, whatever form that expression may take, is a necessity, a need of our being, since it is only by means of that expression that we can come to a recognition of our own infinite possibilities; that we can, step by step, come to the realization of our sublime origin, of our inherent perfection.

Secondly. That although we often think we know both what we feel and what we are capable of feeling, in reality we do not and we cannot know the full power of our emotion until that emotion has expressed itself. And not to know what we really feel is not to know what we really are, since feeling is the only true and unerring sign of the stage we have reached in our spiritual recognition of universal truth.

In our present state of only partial recognition of universal truth, all expression must necessarily be tentative. After each tentative expression we become conscious that all is not yet expressed, and this consciousness impels us to further expressions, which grow ever finer, higher, clearer,

and more true, until the perfect and triumphant expression of the individualized soul is reached.

The apprehension that we have, up to the present time, of our sublime inheritance is still so dim, so vague, that it seems to us a something which does not yet exist, but which somewhere and somehow may possibly be attained by us in the far-off future.

This real and perfect self, or true ego, then, which we so fitfully and so dimly perceive, is what we call our ideal. The higher and grander our ideal is, the more of our true self we recognize, our ideal being the measure of our existing power to recognize our own real possibilities.

The fact that our ideal expands and grows ever higher with each expression of our powers, is because with each new expression we already recognize something more of our real ego. That real ego cannot either expand or contract; it simply *is;* and it is only the mind of the individual that can expand to a recognition of that sublime reality, or contract to a belittling thereof.

In other words, the individualized soul, as essential power, cannot grow. It is essentially infinite, inasmuch as it can draw at will on the inexhaustible source of essential life and power which we call the universal soul. The only growth it can attain is in consciousness of power, which consciousness can only be achieved through expression.

As the individualized soul continues to grow in consciousness, it draws a fuller draught of power

from the universal soul, or fountain of life; hence the soul's impulse for expression.

We may find an analogy in the basin of a fountain which is supplied from an inexhaustible spring of water. The water contained in the basin must either be drawn off or it must overflow, because of the living spring which forces its way into the basin; and as the water in the basin overflows, it is ever renewed, freshened, and purified by the penetrating force of the parent spring.

It is thus that by the expression of its essential power the individualized soul draws perpetually on its parent and inexhaustible source of life and power; it is thus that the impulse of expression is inherent in the power itself; it is thus that the impulse of expression grows stronger by virtue of that expression, in the same way that, the more water flows out of the basin, the more can flow in from the parent spring; it is thus that the power which is expressed is perpetually renewed, perpetually vitalized and purified.

If a man becomes so absorbed in the material things of life—in money-getting, high living, fashionable society, worldly ambition—that he never seeks to express or to recognize his true self, he is like unto him who, having buried in a deep well his large inheritance, and having forgotten the treasure of which he is the actual owner, begs his daily bread from door to door.

He who is rich and knows it not is poorer than he who owns nothing. So he who, being gifted

by nature with the power to see, yet ignores his own latent divinity, is more abject than the beast who has not the power to perceive the God within.

Third. That expression in art is the greatest factor in the progress of man towards the recognition of his highest perfection. It aids both the artist who expresses himself in his art and all of those who receive the impression of that art. So the artisan profits vicariously by the truth contained in the expression of the artist, and the recognition of that truth, which is shared alike by the artist and the artisan, constitutes a bond of union between them which is a type of all vicarious at-one-ment.

Thus does art to-day present itself to us in the guise of a redeemer. It instructs, it illuminates, it inspires, it works for the unification of the human race.

The more direct, the more spontaneous the expression, the more will it be charged with the living truth, fresh and vital from the soul or ego itself; and as there is no expression that can be so direct as the voice, we have in the art of singing a most wonderful and a most effectual means of expression, than which there is none greater, none more sublime.

The power of absolute, direct, and spontaneous expression by the voice has, however, not yet been reached. We have had suggestions of it by certain great singers, enough to make us feel that the voice is inherently capable of thrilling us

to the sublimest emotions, but these suggestions have been fitful and sporadic. It is because of their rareness, however, that we have been so strongly moved, even to the extent of glorifying and worshipping the individual singers who have made such a grand possibility, even for a moment, apparent to us.

Fourth. That before this direct expression by the voice can become a living and lasting power, we must come to a better understanding of the peculiar relations of our mental and physical organizations to each other, as well as of the relation of these to our higher consciousness or soul.

Our mental development has now reached a point where such as represent the progressive thought of the day are capable of perceiving much more of the purpose of this wonderful trinity, soul, mind, and body, than has hitherto been defined, and also of understanding how these organisms act and react on one another.

To comprehend the different functions of our mind and body, as related to the soul, or motive power of our being, is to be able to co-operate intelligently with the natural law of evolution instead of playing at cross-purposes with it, as we but too often have done and are doing, because of a conventionalized perversion of the truth.

The body has its own organs, the senses, by means of which it receives impressions from the outer world, and conveys them to the mind. In its perfect totality, however, the body is only the

organ of another organ, finer, higher, and more wonderfully constructed than it, to wit, the mind. In its turn, the mind is the organ of the soul, its functions in singing being to interpret and give definite form to the soul's initial desire for expression, which desire produces what we have called "will-impulse." It is this will-impulse, born of the soul's emotion, which, according to natural law, should energize every note we sing. It causes the mind, or form-constructor, to impress the body, or physical instrument, which in its turn utters the vocal sound.

The utterance of the vocal sound itself should be so sudden, so spontaneous, that the singer remains unconscious of the whole process of tone-production, as well as of the vocal apparatus, even of the whole body itself.

The body should be passive, even to apparent devitalization, up to the moment of tone-attack. There should be no sensation of readiness for the tone in the throat, no sensation of opening the throat to prepare the way. On the contrary, it should seem as if the body were first galvanized into life by the electric impulse of the tone itself; as if the tone, not generated in the body, but in the soul itself (the seat of feeling, not sensation), compelled its own expression, opening up its own channels, and bursting through every obstruction of the flesh with the suddenness and power of a flash of lightning from the heavens.

Fifth. That such freedom, such spontaneity of

utterance, can only be reached by concentration or unification of energy. In other words, the mental consciousness and the will-impulse or tone-impulse must merge one into the other. The mind must not absorb consciousness for its own independent activities, such as observing the process or anticipating the effect of singing.

When we sing, we should only be aware of the emotion we are to express and the tone-impulse which compels its expression. We should not know how the utterance of the tone is brought about; neither should we be aware of the movements or adjustments and modifications of position which actually take place in our vocal instrument. We should feel no responsibility for the quality or effect of the tone we sing, as responsibility and freedom cannot go hand in hand together.

The functions of mind in our general life are numerous and varied, but in singing they are few and simple. It is for this reason that our ever-increasing mental activity or consciousness, while it is so important a factor in our development, handicaps us in the act of expression, by absorbing energy which is required to vitalize the impulse of that expression.

We must, therefore, bring about this concentration of energy by forbidding the mind to wander from its real purpose. The thing that will help the mind most effectually to this is the recognition in the abstract by the mind of its own

function, as related to the other organisms, and of the particular functions of those other organisms themselves; inasmuch as to understand *how* a thing is produced is to make us cease to inquire or to *observe* how it is done, for what we already know we no longer seek to know. Thus the mind comes to rest by virtue of the abstract knowledge of the true relations of our different organisms and their separate functions in expression, and this repose is felt in the singleness of purpose between mind and soul, and in the directness of utterance of the emotions which we call spontaneity.

Sixth. That there is, however, something more to be achieved before spontaneity through concentration of energy can be attained, and that something is the perfect mastery over all that relates to technique.

The voice must be rendered able to execute anything and everything that vocal music in all its varieties can possibly require of a singer. Everything that appertains to mechanism or technique should become automatic. The singer should have no more concern about how it will all take place than have the lilies of the field how they grow.

If this perfect automatism be attained, the process of singing goes forward without its absorbing any energy of thought or observation, care or responsibility, so that the whole energy or consciousness of the singer is concentrated on the emotion and tone-impulse.

The other aspect of this natural law of automatism, however, must not be forgotten. We all know from experience that the oftener we do a thing in a certain way the easier it becomes to do it. We may even think of something else, and still do the thing as well as when we give it our attention. Now, this force of habit, or automatism, works in two ways, for us and against us. If, in beginning our vocal studies, we were natural and normal; if our bodies and minds represented virgin soil that has only to be cultivated, we should simply have to start and acquire a correct automatism in our vocal processes, which would take but a comparatively short time, and which would prove very easy and immensely interesting. But alas! we are not natural, we are not normal to begin with. We start already with bad habits, either inadvertently formed by us or inherited. A false and perverted automatism is already established. Our virgin soil is very much like that of New Hampshire, where the farmers have to spend time and energy in digging out rocks, before they can reach soil at all in which to plant their seed.

We also must dig out our rocks. We must rid ourselves of our bad habits before we can form new and good ones.

This ridding ourselves of our bad habits is, however, not such a formidable matter as may be supposed, and no one need feel discouraged at the undertaking. All confirmed bad habits, whether of mind or body, are manifest on the circumfer-

ence in such a way that their presence and effect can be recognized by the close observer. These habits always appear in the form of abnormal tension in certain parts. If, therefore, the unnatural tension is overcome wherever it exists in the body, the physical equilibrium thus restored will react on the mind, and bring about in it also the necessary freedom and repose.

In order to relax the unnatural tension in the body, the whole attention must for the time being be given to the body itself, while exercises for relaxing the tension in the different parts are practised. It stands to reason, therefore, that such exercises must be practised independently of singing.

The process of restoring proper equilibrium by learning to relax unnecessary tension need not be either a tedious or a long one, where it is pursued with determination, perseverance, and intelligence, as everything in us will respond with surprising readiness to persistent endeavor, owing to the fact that when we are striving to bring ourselves into harmony with what is beautiful and true and pure, we have the whole persistent force of natural law fighting on our side; and what chance can there be for habits or second nature or even for heredity when natural law, which is of all eternity, enters the ranks against them to back the intelligent human will?

THE END

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